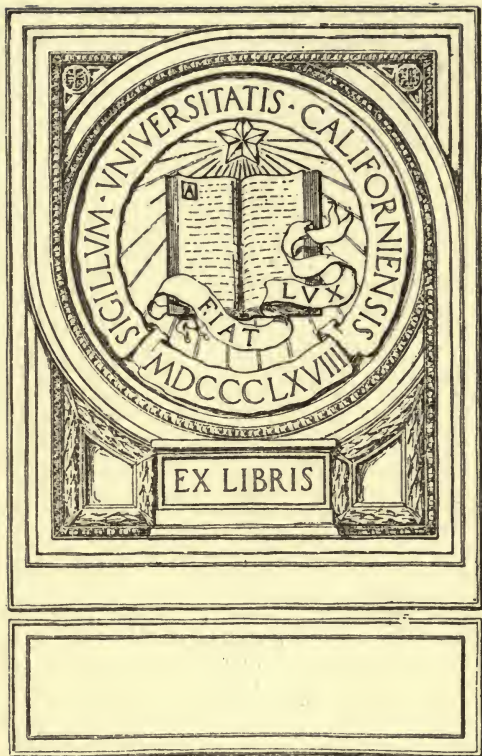


YC 101452







Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2007 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation



GREAT LEADERS SERIES  
EDITED BY E. HERSHEY SNEATH, PH.D., LL.D.,  
YALE UNIVERSITY

JESUS OF NAZARETH  
A BIOGRAPHY



THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
NEW YORK • BOSTON • CHICAGO • DALLAS  
ATLANTA • SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED  
LONDON • BOMBAY • CALCUTTA  
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.  
TORONTO

# JESUS OF NAZARETH

## A BIOGRAPHY

BY

GEORGE A. BARTON, PH.D., LL.D.

*Professor of Semitic Languages in the University of Pennsylvania,  
and Professor of New Testament Literature and Language in  
the Divinity School of the Protestant Episcopal Church in  
Philadelphia; sometime Professor of Biblical Literature  
and Semitic Languages in Bryn Mawr College.*

"He spake of lilies, vines, and corn,  
The sparrow and the raven,  
And words so natural yet so wise  
Were on men's hearts engraven.

And yeast and bread and flax and cloth  
And eggs and fish and candles—  
See how the most familiar world  
He most divinely handles."

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1924

*All rights reserved*

BT 301  
B3

Copyright, 1922,  
By THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

---

Set up and printed. Published November, 1922

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*mem*

TO  
RHODA CAROLINE BARTON  
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GENERATION  
FOR WHICH THIS BOOK IS WRITTEN  
IT IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

544523





## PREFACE

THE life of Jesus Christ is the most important event in the religious history of mankind. The significance of it is eternal. Nowhere else has God so revealed his nature. How shall one approach the task of writing an account of it?

Most of our knowledge of this wonderful life is derived from the four Gospels, but in many points the Gospels do not agree. They often differ as to the order of events and the occasions which called forth some of the sublimest teaching of the Master. They differ also as to the length of time covered by his ministry. Under these circumstances those who undertake this delicate and sacred task to-day fall into five groups according to their methods of treating the sources.

1. There are those who regard all the Gospels as equally valuable sources of information, and seek as best they can to harmonize their statements. These writers base their chronology of Christ's ministry on the Gospel of John, the latest of the Gospels, which was written about seventy years after the Crucifixion. This method produces the type of devotional biography of Jesus which has within the last century become conventional.

2. Another group of writers on the life of Jesus may be called the historical school. They seek to use the knowledge of the composition and dates of the Gospels which has been gained by modern study in accordance with the methods of modern historical research. Where the Gospels differ, greater weight is given to the earlier document, unless there appears to be some good reason

for not doing it. As the Gospels imply that Christ had a real human development, and "grew in wisdom" as well as "in stature," writers of this school reverently seek to utilize such knowledge as can be obtained from modern psychology in the effort to understand something of his inner life and its bearing upon his earthly career.

3. Still another group of writers have been called the "skeptical school." These regard large portions of the earliest Gospel as unhistorical. They believe that Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah; he was only a great prophet. They admire him and praise his teaching and insight, but they think the Church through the centuries has been mistaken in regarding him as the Son of God.

4. A fourth group of writers go to the other extreme. They believe that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, and that he meant by the term just what the Jews of his time meant by it. Such writers bury Jesus completely under the mistaken world-theories of the first century Jews. They make him less than the prophets of the Old Testament, for each one of them, while in some respects a child of his age, was far above his age in the sweep of his ethical and spiritual insight. Too many vital parts of the Gospels have to be explained away to make out that Jesus' conception of his Messiahship was the same as the Jewish.

5. There is, lastly, a group of writers who endeavor to prove that Jesus never lived—that the story of his life is made up by mingling myths of heathen gods, Babylonian, Egyptian, Persian, Greek, etc. No real scholar regards the work of these men seriously. They lack the most elementary knowledge of historical research. Some of them are eminent scholars in other subjects, such as Assyriology and mathematics, but their writings about the life of Jesus have no more claim to be regarded as

historical than Alice in Wonderland or the Adventures of Baron Munchausen. This book has been written in accordance with the methods of the second group mentioned above. Historical methods of study afford the present generation a clearer knowledge of the Son of Man as he was and as he lived than any other generation of Christians has had since that group of Twelve who walked and talked with him. The writer has thought it his duty in writing a book for students to try, however imperfectly, to give them the benefit of this more recent knowledge which makes the portrait of this wonderful life so real. Two reasons have impelled him to this most difficult undertaking. One is that these young people must live their lives in a period when scientific views of the world will be even more generally accepted than they are now, and when it will be increasingly difficult for educated people to keep their Christian faith vital, unless they feel assured that the Father of Jesus Christ is the God of astronomy and geology, and the God of religious faith is the God of the laboratory. The other reason is that he has learned, in more than thirty years' experience in teaching young people the Bible by historical methods, that such study creates an interest in the subject that no other method can produce, that it brushes aside what seem to be unrealities, and quickens faith.

It is not to be supposed that the science of our time is infallible, or its knowledge complete. "We know in part and we prophesy in part." It is nevertheless our duty to

"Paint the thing as we see it

For the God of things as they are,"

always keeping our picture so in accord with reality that the inspiring and transforming power of the great Subject of our portrait may exert its full influence upon us.

Our scientific knowledge has been built up by observing facts and forming theories in accordance with them. This is called inductive reasoning. Most of our religious ideas were reached by forming theories and supposing that facts correspond to them. This is called deductive reasoning. Science, once grounded on deductive inferences, has gained immensely by changing to the inductive method. Many of the intellectual difficulties of young people arise from this difference of method. The present writer regards it as the duty of religious teachers to produce a religious literature in which the grounds of faith are secured by the inductive method. In this book he has accordingly made an effort to follow the inductive rather than the dogmatic way, confident that for the thoughtful young people of the present and the future the goal of vital faith will be more easily and surely reached by this path.

Students of the life of Christ are well aware that, where the Gospels differ as to the order of events, it is impossible to reach certainty, and consequently opinions of scholars differ widely. In his conception of the order of events in some important parts of the ministry of Jesus the writer has found himself in agreement with some of the conclusions of the late Professor Charles A. Briggs set forth in his little book, *New Light on the Life of Christ*, a book which deserves wider recognition than it has yet received. One cannot, within the space allowed, give his reasons for many of the positions adopted, he can only beg the reader to believe that, if there were opportunity, reasons for them could be given that would be at least respectable in the court of scholarship. It is the writer's hope that he may at some time be able to treat some of these topics more fully elsewhere.

The writing of this book has been at once the most



sacred, and the most difficult task that its author ever undertook. It is a pleasure gratefully to acknowledge the aid which he has received in every part of it from the helpful criticisms and suggestions of his wife.

It is not without a keen realization of its imperfections that this portrait is laid at the feet of the Master. May its faults be forgiven and over-ruled, and may He, Who through the centuries has employed many humble and imperfect instruments, make it of some use in the building up of the kingdom of God.

GEORGE A. BARTON.





# CONTENTS

## BOOK I. THINGS TO BE KNOWN BEFOREHAND

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE LAND WHERE JESUS LIVED . . . . .	3
II. THE FOUR GOSPELS . . . . .	14
III. THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW, MARK, AND LUKE . . .	19
IV. THE GOSPEL OF JOHN . . . . .	24
V. WHAT PEOPLE THOUGHT OF THE WORLD WHEN JESUS LIVED . . . . .	28
VI. THE TEMPLE AND THE SYNAGOGUE . . . . .	36
VII. THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN . . . . .	41
VIII. JEWISH SECTS AND IDEALS IN THE TIME OF CHRIST	47
IX. THE DATES IN THE LIFE OF JESUS . . . . .	54

## BOOK II. THE LIFE OF JESUS BEFORE HIS MINISTRY

X. THE BIRTH OF JESUS . . . . .	67
XI. THE EARLY CHILDHOOD OF JESUS . . . . .	73
XII. JESUS AT PLAY AND AT SCHOOL . . . . .	79
XIII. THE BOY'S VISIT TO THE TEMPLE . . . . .	88
XIV. THE SILENT YEARS AT NAZARETH . . . . .	98
XV. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS . . . . .	109
XVI. THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS . . . . .	117

## BOOK III. THE MINISTRY OF JESUS IN GALILEE

XVII. THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY . . . . .	129
XVIII. A DAY IN CAPERNAUM . . . . .	135
XIX. A TOUR THROUGH GALILEE . . . . .	142
XX. BY THE SEA OF GALILEE AGAIN . . . . .	147
XXI. THE FIRST PASSOVER OF JESUS' MINISTRY . . .	153
XXII. JESUS AGAIN AT CAPERNAUM . . . . .	159
XXIII. JESUS SELECTS THE TWELVE APOSTLES . . . .	163
XXIV. JESUS' FIRST LESSON TO A CLASS OF TWELVE .	169
XXV. ANOTHER LESSON TO A CLASS OF TWELVE . . .	175

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXVI. JESUS AND A ROMAN CENTURION . . . . .	181
XXVII. THE WIDOW OF NAIN AND HER SON . . . . .	184
XXVIII. THE MESSENGERS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST . . . . .	187
XXIX. JESUS AT THE FEAST OF PENTECOST . . . . .	191
XXX. JESUS, A PHARISEE, AND A SINFUL WOMAN . . . . .	194
XXXI. JESUS MISUNDERSTOOD BY HIS BROTHERS . . . . .	199
XXXII. JESUS' GREAT CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE . . . . .	204
XXXIII. TWO REMARKABLE INCIDENTS . . . . .	209
XXXIV. JAIRUS AND HIS DAUGHTER . . . . .	214
XXXV. THE TWELVE SENT FORTH TO PREACH . . . . .	219

#### BOOK IV. THE PERÆAN MINISTRY OF JESUS

XXXVI. JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES . . . . .	227
XXXVII. JESUS SENDS OUT SEVENTY PREACHERS . . . . .	233
XXXVIII. JESUS BEGINS HIS FIRST MINISTRY IN PERÆA . . . . .	238
XXXIX. JESUS' FIRST MINISTRY IN PERÆA . . . . .	243
XL. THE FEAST OF DEDICATION . . . . .	248
XLI. JESUS' SECOND MINISTRY IN PERÆA . . . . .	253
XLII. THE SEVENTY RETURN AND REPORT TO JESUS . . . . .	258

#### BOOK V. JESUS AVOIDING HIS ENEMIES

XLIII. THE ILLNESS OF LAZARUS AT BETHANY . . . . .	265
XLIV. JESUS AVOIDS HIS ENEMIES . . . . .	270
XLV. THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE . . . . .	276
XLVI. JESUS ONCE MORE IN CAPERNAUM . . . . .	282
XLVII. JESUS TELLS HIS DISCIPLES THAT HE IS THE MESSIAH . . . . .	287
XLVIII. THE TRANSFIGURATION . . . . .	291
XLIX. JESUS' LAST VISIT AT CAPERNAUM . . . . .	296
L. JESUS' LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM . . . . .	303

#### BOOK VI. THE PASSION AND RESURRECTION

LI. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM . . . . .	315
LII. THE EVENTS OF THE FOLLOWING MONDAY . . . . .	320
LIII. THE EVENTS OF TUESDAY . . . . .	327
LIV. IN THE TEMPLE ON WEDNESDAY . . . . .	331
LV. AN INSTRUCTIVE WALK AND A SUPPER . . . . .	337
LVI. JUDAS ISCARIOT AND THE CHIEF PRIESTS . . . . .	344
LVII. THE LAST PASSOVER SUPPER . . . . .	350

CHAPTER	PAGE
LVIII. IN GETHSEMANE . . . . .	357
LIX. THE EXAMINATION BEFORE THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES	365
LX. THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE . . . . .	373
LXI. THE CRUCIFIXION . . . . .	381
LXII. THE RESURRECTION . . . . .	390
LXIII. THE PLACE OF JESUS IN HISTORY . . . . .	393



BOOK I  
THINGS TO BE KNOWN BEFOREHAND

Chapters I-IX





## CHAPTER I

### THE LAND WHERE JESUS LIVED

**W**HEN we read the life of a person it is a great help toward making the story seem real to have a vivid conception of the land in which the person lived. If we can imagine how its hills and valleys looked, what kind of houses people lived in, how the hills and plains were decked with verdure or flowers, and whether the air was clear or murky with mist, it is much easier to make mental pictures of the man or woman whose life we are studying. Jesus of Nazareth is the most important person who ever lived in the world. Beside him the greatest kings, prophets, statesmen, poets, and scholars seem unimportant. His life above all other lives ought to become real to us. We must, therefore, before we begin to study it, read a little about his home and the land in which it was situated.

Had Jesus lived in any other land, he would have hallowed it and made it dear to mankind. Palestine, the land where he did live, is of deep interest to us because it was his home. It happens also to be a land deeply interesting in itself. Bounded on the east by the Arabian Desert, this little country, which is about as large as the combined states of Connecticut and Rhode Island, formed a highway between Babylonia and Egypt, the two oldest civilized countries in the world. For many centuries before Christ was born caravans of camels had toiled slowly across Palestine carrying back and forth the products of the fertile valleys of the Euphrates and the Nile.

Many centuries earlier still, the hand of God had wrought to make Palestine the most wonderful country of its size in the world. Late in geologic time there was tremendous volcanic action in Syria, Palestine, and far to the south of them. A great crack was made in the earth's crust extending from the neighborhood of Mount Hermon far down into the Indian Ocean to the south of Arabia, and the rock-strata on the west of this crack slipped down a mile or more toward the center of the earth. While the crack gradually filled up, it left a deep basin, which now forms the Red Sea, the Gulf of Akaba, the Araba and the Jordan valley. The Jordan valley is really a great trench in the earth's surface caused by this crack. At the Huleh in Galilee it is just about on a level with the ocean; at the Sea of Galilee it is 681 feet below the level of the ocean; at the Dead Sea it is almost 1,300 feet below the level of the ocean. Palestine is a sub-tropical country; it lies in the same latitude as the southern half of the state of Georgia. Its climate is everywhere mild. Into the long trench of the Jordan valley the sun pours with great power, making a really hot climate. In winter the temperature is about 70 degrees; in summer, often from 110 to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. In this heat tropical plants flourish; oleanders bloom and mustard plants grow ten to fifteen feet high. In the language of Jesus "it becometh a tree, so that the birds of heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof."

On either side of this valley mountains rise. These mountains are higher at the south of the country than at the north. The range on the east has at the south a comparatively level summit, where the country of Moab lies; in the center rise the hills of Gilead; to the east of the Sea of Galilee it descends to the rolling country of the Hauran. In the time of Christ, Gilead and Moab

constituted the region called Peræa. The range of mountains on the west of the Jordan is at Hebron about 3,000 feet above the level of the Mediterranean Sea, and slopes gradually downward until, at the great plain of Esdrælon, it vanishes altogether. Just north of this plain, where the village of Nazareth stands, it begins gradually to rise again and in northern Galilee attains a height of about 3,000 feet. The volcanic upheavals of late geologic time twisted the surface of this region and much of that east of the Jordan into many tortuous shapes. It is accordingly diversified with hills and with valleys, which have been deepened by the rains of many centuries. The result is a greater variety of scenery than is to be found in any other country of the same size.

To the west of this range there lies the sea-coast plain which constituted ancient Philistia. The range of hills between the Jordan valley and Philistia was the scene of the most of Biblical history. One cannot travel far on either side of the Jordan, however, without reaching hill-tops from which great vistas of this country can be seen. Such wonderfully beautiful views expand the thoughts of those who look upon them.

At the northern end of the Jordan valley, Mount Hermon, the highest peak of the region, rises to a height of 9,300 feet. The rains of the Palestinian winter fall as snow on Mount Hermon, where they lie unmelted till the following July. From many a hilltop in Palestine the hoary head of Hermon is visible. From many points in the Jordan valley it can be seen. One travels there in a tropical atmosphere, surrounded by pink oleanders and other tropical flowers, often in full view of this snow-capped mountain. To have traveled that valley with Jesus and amid such scenes to have listened to his words, was the privilege of the fishermen of Galilee!



Practically all the rain in Palestine falls between November and April. At times there may be a shower in October or in May, but these are rare. The season of verdure and of agricultural activity is accordingly in what we call winter. During the long dry summer, when never a drop of rain falls, nor a cloud flecks the sky, the hills become mere dusty surfaces which look like ash-heaps. Here and there a vineyard or an olive orchard relieves the barrenness, but otherwise it seems as though those dead hills could never sustain a living thing. When the rain comes, however, grass springs up. The peasants sow their wheat, oats, barley, and sesame, and these, too, soon become green. At the end of January wild flowers begin to bloom, and by April the whole land is a continuous flower garden of unimagined beauty. There are anemones, white, and all shades of purple, red, and pink. Some of them are as large as saucers. Bachelors' buttons of every hue grow in profusion, as do red, pink, and blue poppies, and countless flowers of which I do not know the names. Every landscape is a mass of color. I never saw anywhere else such a profusion of flowers. Much learning has been expended in trying to determine what flower Jesus had in mind when he said, "Consider the lilies. . . . Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." In the Aramaic which Jesus spoke the word which is often translated "lily" includes all beautiful flowers. Probably Jesus had before him one of these glorious Palestinian hillsides that were a perfect riot of color. Probably with a gesture of his hand toward them he said "Consider the flowers." God clothes them in exquisite beauty, though they are not anxious about clothing. Do not let anxiety about clothes eat the heart out of your life! (Matt. 6: 28 ff.)

Palestine was a little country, but, for all its beauty,

it was not a fertile country. The sea-coast plain, the plain of Esdrælon, and the plains of Moab were fertile, but the seacoast was, during much of Biblical history, in the hands of foreigners. The Jordan valley was fertile where irrigated, but these fertile portions were but a fraction of the land. Most of the Hebrew people lived on the hills, where the rocks were nowhere far from the surface and often filled much of the fields. They were compelled to wrest a livelihood from the meager soil between the rocks. It is, however, in difficult surroundings like these that God has brought to perfection the greatest men.

In the time of Christ, Palestine was divided into four parts, each of which bore a different name. The most southerly of these on the west of the Jordan was Judæa. It corresponded roughly with the limits of the old kingdom of Judah though, unlike that kingdom, it extended across Philistia to the Mediterranean. Jerusalem was its capital. When, in 444 B.C., Nehemiah returned from the East with authority to reëstablish the Jewish state as a colony of Persia, that state consisted only of Jerusalem and a little section of country around it. The southern frontier was only about twenty miles south of Jerusalem. Hebron was in Idumæa at that time. Judah continued small until about 140 B.C., when Simon the Maccabee, carried its frontier to the sea and gained Joppa as a sea-port. Later John Hyrcanus, Simon's son, conquered Idumæa, compelling the Idumæans to become Jews, thus restoring to Judæa its old boundaries. Jerusalem contained the Temple. There Jehovah dwelt. To the Jew it was the most sacred spot on earth. At Jerusalem were the priests who performed the sacred ceremonies, the scribes who copied the law, and the great rabbis who explained the law and the oral rules which helped men to

observe it. The people of Judah thought they were nearer to God than other people. They looked down on everybody else.

In the center of Palestine lay Samaria, the principal cities of which were Samaria and Shechem. Orthodox Jews regarded Samaria with aversion, because the Samaritans were, from their point of view, heretics. When in 722 B.C. the Assyrian king, Sargon, destroyed Samaria, he deported a considerable number of its inhabitants. He replaced them with people from five different cities, three of which were in Babylonia. These newcomers were soon attacked by bears and other wild beasts of the region. They thought it was because they did not worship the God of the land and asked the natives, therefore, that a priest be sent them to teach them the worship of the God of the land. This was done. They intermarried afterward with the Israelites who had not been carried into captivity, and their descendants came to regard themselves as good Jews. The Jews of Judæa would have nothing to do with them, however, because they were in part of foreign descent, and in the time of Nehemiah the rupture between Jew and Samaritan became complete. The Samaritans took the Pentateuch as their Bible (that was all the Scripture that the Jewish Bible then contained). Their numbers multiplied, so that at the end of the first century A.D., when the Jewish historian Josephus wrote his history, they occupied villages from the great plain of Esdrælon on the north to about seven miles south of Mount Gerizim. We do not know what the southern boundary of Samaria was in the time of Christ; it may have been farther south than this. The Philistine plain bounded Samaria on the west and the Jordan valley on the east.

Samaria was a richer country than Judæa. There are



broad and fertile valleys between its hills. The struggle for food was not there so severe. So great was the aversion of Jews to Samaritans that a Jew would not go through Samaritan territory if he could help it. In traveling back and forth from Judæa to Galilee Jews usually went around by the Jordan valley to avoid Samaria.

North of Samaria lay Galilee. Its southern part consisted of the plain of Esdrælon, its rolling fields well watered and dotted with villages. On the north of the plain low hills rise, between which are wide valleys. As one goes farther north the hills merge into the mountains of Galilee, which, like the mountains of Judæa, form a continuous range about 3,000 feet high. The northern boundary of Galilee was the Lebanon Mountains. The name Galilee means, "circle," "district," or "region." In Isaiah 9:1 it is called "Galilee of the nations." It seems that the Israelites never succeeded in fully displacing the Canaanitish inhabitants from it. In 732 B.C., Tiglathpileser IV, king of Assyria, carried away the more prominent citizens of Galilee and settled in their place captives brought from elsewhere. No such movement toward the Hebrew religion occurred here as occurred in Samaria. It appears that Galilee was lost to the Hebrew faith until after its re-conquest by the kings of Judæa, John Hyrcanus I and Alexander Jannæus between 109 and 79 B.C. After that a good many Jews settled in Galilee, but they lived far from Jerusalem and were looked down upon by the people of that city. The Jews of the capital thought them rude country folk.

Just to the north of the plain of Esdrælon, nestling in one of the little valleys lay the village of Nazareth, where Jesus passed his boyhood and early manhood. Surrounding hills shut in this hamlet made sacred by the Master, but from a hill on the north side of the village an ex-

tended view of the historic plain of Esdrælon may be had, and a glimpse of the distant Mediterranean. The Judæans despised Nazareth. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" was a proverb. In consequence we have been accustomed to think of Jesus as brought up in a kind of backwoods town. Only three miles from Nazareth, however, to the northwest was the city of Sephoris, which from 4 B.C. to 39 A.D. was the residence of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa. A boy who lives within three miles of the capital of his country cannot be said to be in the backwoods. He is fairly near to such civilization as his country possesses.

Two and a half hours' walk to the east of Nazareth rises Mount Tabor. It is 2,800 feet high, has a rounded top, and lifts its head like a huge haystack above the surrounding lands. From its top an extensive and beautiful view is visible—the distant Mediterranean, Mount Carmel, the great plain of Esdrælon dotted with its towns, the deep rift of the Jordan valley with the river winding through it as a tiny thread of silver, to the north the panorama of the hills of Galilee on which lay Cana and many other villages, while far to the northeast hoary Hermon raises its lofty head. At the foot of Tabor on the east lie the historic villages of Endor and Nain, one famed for Saul's visit to the witch,<sup>1</sup> the other for Jesus' restoration of a son to a sorrowing mother.<sup>2</sup> In the time of Christ a small town occupied the summit of Tabor. We do not know whether Jesus ever climbed to the top and saw the view or not. One would like to believe that he did!

On the east of Galilee the Jordan valley broadens out to contain the Sea of Galilee. This sea lies in a basin

<sup>1</sup> I Sam. 28:8-14.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 7:11-17.

created by volcanic action. On the east, west, and north of the sea are precipitous cliffs of granite or other igneous rock. From the northwest corner of the lake a plain or valley about three miles in width gradually rises into the hill country. This plain was called Chinnereth in Old Testament times, a name corrupted later to Gennesaret. From this plain the sea is sometimes called the sea of Gennesaret. The sea itself is about thirteen miles long. Its greatest width, about eight miles, is at the northern end. At the south end, which lies almost directly east from Nazareth, it tapers almost to a point. Into this lake, near its northeast corner, the Jordan River flows; it loses itself in the lake, but emerges from its southern apex, to rush along the downward way, which gave it its name, Jordan, *i.e.*, "Descender."

In the time of Christ this lake which lies 681 feet below the level of the Mediterranean and possesses a tropical climate, was a busy place. Along its shores nine cities lay, each of which is said to have had 15,000 inhabitants; some probably had more. One of the caravan routes from Egypt to Damascus lay along its western shore and around its northern end, crossing the Jordan on a bridge, ruins of which are still visible. Catching fish in the lake to feed this large population was a principal industry.

As we read the Gospels we gain the impression that the region on the east side of the Sea of Galilee was called the Decapolis. Decapolis is a Greek word, meaning "ten city" (region). It applied to a federation of ten cities, the population of which was chiefly Hellenic. The federation appears to have been formed by permission of the Roman General Pompey, when he took possession of Syria for Rome in 65-63 B.C. The most northerly of the cities was Damascus; the most southerly, Philadelphia



(Rabba Ammon). The Decapolis included only a small section of territory about each of these cities, not the whole of the country between them. One of these cities, Hippos, lay a little way to the east of the Sea of Galilee. Its territory appears to have bordered on the lake. The Greek inhabitants kept pigs, which were forbidden to the Jews. It was here that Jesus found the herd of many swine feeding. Two of the cities of the Decapolis, Scythopolis (Bethshean) and Pella, lay in the Jordan valley far to the south of the Sea of Galilee. Christ must frequently have passed them on his way to and from Jerusalem, but, so far as we know, he never entered them. All the cities of the Decapolis were adorned with colonnaded streets, beautiful temples, and theaters. Architecturally they were much more attractive than the Jewish cities.

On the east of the Jordan, beginning probably at the great valley of the Yarmuk, some miles south of the Sea of Galilee, lay Peræa. It extended southward to the valley of the Arnon about midway of the Dead Sea; it therefore embraced Gilead and the northern half of what had been Moab in the Old Testament time. Many Jews were, in the time of Christ, scattered through this region; to it, as we shall see, Jesus went to minister.

Politically, the country we have described passed through several changes during the life of Christ. When Christ was born Herod the Great was still ruling. Under his sway all these lands, extending well up toward Damascus, had been united since 37 B.C. Herod died four years before the beginning of our era, and his lands were divided among his sons. Archelaus received Judæa and Samaria; Antipas, Galilee and Peræa, and Philip the regions toward Damascus (Ituræa and Trachonitis). Antipas and Philip held their territories during the life-

time of Jesus, but Archelaus proved such an impossible ruler that Augustus, the Roman emperor, banished him in 6 A.D. to Gaul and placed Judæa and Samaria under Roman procurators. This arrangement continued till 41 A.D. The fifth of these procurators was Pontius Pilate.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FOUR GOSPELS

WE obtain our knowledge of the life of Jesus from the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These four Gospels have been the generally received sources of information as to the life of Jesus since the early years of the second century of the Christian era. During the second century they were not the only Gospels in circulation. We hear of a Gospel according to the Hebrews, a Gospel according to the Egyptians, a Gospel of Marcion, and a Gospel according to Peter. A fragment of the last was found in Egypt several years ago and quotations from the others are known. It is certain that each of these four Gospels was based on one or more of our New Testament Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Their authors modified the gospel story in various ways to suit the ideas of different classes of people. Their books were, however, never read and accepted by all Christians as reliable accounts of the life of Jesus.

In addition to these Gospels, but of later date by about two centuries, there are a number of Apocryphal Gospels, such as the Gospel of James, the Infancy of Mary and Jesus, the Nativity of the Carpenter, the Gospel of Thomas, the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, and the Gospel of Nicodemus, which attempt to tell more of the childhood and youth of Jesus than our four Gospels do. For example, one of them relates that, when Jesus was a little boy playing with other children, they all modeled some

clay birds; whereupon Jesus suddenly gave life to his bird and it flew away. Such stories are of no historical value. They are simply the imaginings of pious Christians as they tried to think what Jesus, the Incarnate God, might have done. For a life of Jesus that is to be really historical we have to rely on the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The task of putting together what these Gospels tell us so as to make a connected account of Jesus' life is not, however, so simple as it used to be thought. Modern literary study has brought to light much information as to how our Gospels were written and, as you will see, one must take some of this into account if he would write real history. One of the most striking facts that has to be noted is that while Matthew, Mark, and Luke all give much the same outline of the life of Christ, the Gospel of John stands apart from them, differing from them not only in many details but in its whole portrait of Christ. In particular the following outstanding points should be observed:

1. According to the Synoptists, as Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called (since they present much the same synopsis of the life of the Master), the ministry of Jesus lasted only a little over a year and he attended one Passover, that at which he was crucified. According to the Gospel of John it lasted over two years and, perhaps, over three years, and he attended three Passovers (those mentioned in John 2:23, 6:4, and 11:55). If the unnamed feast mentioned in John 5:1 was a Passover, as many think, then, according to this Gospel, he attended four Passovers and his ministry extended over more than three years. Thus John differs from the other Gospels as to the length of Jesus' ministry.

2. According to the Synoptic Gospels the ministry of



Jesus was expended mainly upon Galilee. There is no statement that Jesus went to Jerusalem during his ministry except at the time he was arrested, condemned, and crucified. According to John, the ministry of Jesus was spent mainly in Judæa. John, however, knew of a Galilean ministry (see John 7:1), though he did not describe it. John thus differs in a good degree from the other Gospels as to the place of Christ's ministry.

3. In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus is pictured as teaching in monologue. He speaks right on; no one interrupts him. His sayings, too, are often each a kind of jewel, complete in itself. The Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1 ff. are a good example of this. Each one is complete and beautiful in itself; they have no organic connection with one another. Like the sayings in much of the book of Proverbs, they touch like marbles in a bag and are not related like the parts of a connected discourse. On the other hand, the sayings in John are connected discourses; one part is dependent on another. In John, too, the Disciples are represented as interrupting Jesus and asking him questions, thus making his teaching take the form of a dialogue.

4. In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus is portrayed as a great worker of wonders who called himself "The Son of Man." He is pictured as having a real humanity; he "grew in wisdom and stature." Most of the miracles are recorded in these Gospels. In the Gospel of John the emphasis is different. He portrays Jesus as "The Son of God." His human needs and human development are veiled. While John records three or four miracles, the pages of his Gospel are filled for the most part with discourses of Jesus.

5. The Synoptic Gospels represent Jesus as calling himself "The Son of Man," a title that had been applied by

one pre-Christian writer to the Messiah, but which in the Aramaic language which was spoken in Galilee meant also "human being." It was a term that concealed his Messianic claim, though it had in it the possibility of revealing that claim. According to the Synoptists, however, no one suspected for a long time that Jesus was the Messiah. He did not reveal the fact to his Disciples until a few weeks before the end of his earthly career. Up to that time it was a secret locked in his own breast; even the Disciples had to be trained before they could be trusted with it. In the Gospel of John on the other hand, Jesus is represented in the first chapter as announcing his Messiahship to Nathaniel, a stranger; he is also pictured as arguing it publicly with the Jews in many later passages of the Gospel. These representations cannot both be true; they are mutually exclusive. There can be little doubt but that as to this matter Matthew, Mark, and Luke give us the real history, for, as we shall see, they were written long before the Gospel of John, and their picture accords far more nearly with that sound method of teaching that we must suppose that the Great Teacher would follow.

6. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke it is clearly stated that the last supper that Jesus ate with his Disciples was a Passover (Matt. 26: 17; Mark 14: 12; Luke 22: 8 and 15). In John, on the other hand, the last supper was eaten on the day before the Passover (see John 13: 29; 18: 28). John differs, then, from the other Gospels as to the date of the last supper and the character of the meal.

7. In the Synoptic Gospels the vision of the descending Spirit and the hearing of the words: "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased," at the time of Jesus' baptism was an experience of Jesus himself. He

heard the voice; he saw the vision; the words were addressed to him (see Mark 1:11). In the Gospel of John, Jesus is considered so divine that it seemed inconceivable that he could need such an experience. It is accordingly represented as a sign given for the benefit of John the Baptist (see John 1:31-33).

Such examples might be multiplied. Enough has been said, however, to show that the Gospel of John had a literary origin in a place or circle where it was in a good degree independent of the traditions and conceptions which are set forth in the other three Gospels. This is sufficient for our present purpose. The deeper questions raised by these differences will be treated at a later point.

According to early Christian documents, one of which was written as early as the middle of the second century, the Gospel of John was composed later than the other three. This confirms the impression made by some of the facts already noted.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW, MARK, AND LUKE

**I**F, then, we are to ask what light modern literary investigation has thrown upon the origin of the Gospels, on the time when they were written, by whom they were written, and what opportunities their authors had to learn about the life of Jesus, we naturally begin with the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Tradition long ago ascribed the authorship of Matthew to the Apostle Matthew, of Mark, to John Mark, a companion of St. Peter and St. Paul, and of Luke, to Luke the Physician, a companion of St. Paul. The earliest Christian writings which tell anything of the Gospels make it evident that each of these persons did indeed write something concerning the life and teachings of Jesus, but it is not always so certain that what they wrote is identical with the Gospels which we have. For example, Papias, a writer of the second century, says that "Matthew wrote the oracles of the Lord in a Hebrew dialect and that every one interpreted them as he could"—a statement that cannot apply to our Gospel according to Matthew, which contains in itself evidence that it was written in Greek. It is probable that what Matthew wrote was a collection of the sayings of Jesus, which was afterward incorporated into what we now have as the Gospel of Matthew. We learn from the preface of the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:1-4) that before that Gospel was written there had been many attempts at Gospel-writing made by others, and that St.



Luke used some of these previously written Gospels as sources of information. It is as certain as anything can well be that the author of our present Gospel of Matthew did the same, and that the Hebrew Gospel which Papias says Matthew wrote was one of the sources from which he drew.

Not to go into too great detail, modern literary study has shown that Mark was the first of our four Gospels to be written, and that it was one of the principal sources employed by Matthew and Luke. All of Mark except twenty-four verses is contained in Matthew and Luke. Mark is much more brief than the other Gospels, but is nevertheless much more vivid and lifelike in its descriptions and accounts. It seems much more like the account of an eye-witness than any of the other Gospels. Papias tells us that it was written by Mark, who obtained his knowledge of what Jesus said and did from Peter. The contents of the Gospel of Mark bear out this statement. For the main substance of Mark's story, then, we have the authority of the Apostle Peter, an eye-witness of many of the events recorded. The original ending of Mark's Gospel was accidentally torn off and lost. The last twelve verses of chapter 16 were added from a different document. It is said that they were written by a man named Aristion, who lived at the beginning of the second century.

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke were written later than Mark and, as has been said, drew upon Mark as one of their sources. Scholars are agreed that they had at least one other written source which was used by them both. This source, they believe, consisted of sayings of Jesus, though it contained an account of his baptism and temptation. Other scholars think that the authors of Matthew and Luke used two sources in common, one

of which contained an account of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, and the other an account of the ministry of Jesus in Peræa. Those who hold the last of these theories think that the author of Matthew wove into his Gospel the "Oracles of the Lord" which the Apostle Matthew had written in Hebrew, and that Luke wove into his Gospel a second account of the ministry of Jesus in Peræa which contained the parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost son (Luke 15) and much other material which is not found in Matthew. All the documents from which the evangelists drew were written very early and at least two of them, the writer believes, gained their information from the apostles, Peter and Matthew. Probably the other writers gained their knowledge from eye-witnesses; indeed, the documents may have been written by eye-witnesses. These facts, which have been established by much painstaking investigation, make these three Gospels historical sources of the highest value.

What we have said of the sources of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke does not apply to the first two chapters of either of those Gospels, or to the genealogy of the Master in the third chapter of Luke. The first generation of Christians were too busy assimilating the good news of the Gospel to ask how Jesus came into the world. When in the second generation of Christians interest turned to this matter, it was found that there were two differing traditions. Matthew followed one of these, according to which Jesus was descended from David through the royal line, was born at Bethlehem where his mother and Joseph had lived up to that time, and went with them to live at Nazareth because they were afraid of Archelaus, king of Judæa. According to the other, recorded in Luke, Joseph and Mary lived at

Nazareth in Galilee, went to Bethlehem, the home of their ancestors, to be enrolled in a census ordered by the Roman emperor Augustus, and Jesus was born while they were there. The two accounts are evidently independent traditions. Their differences leave us in doubt as to the details concerning which they differ. We shall return to this matter in a later chapter.

Many scholars think that the Gospel of Mark was written about the year 70 A.D. and that the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were composed within the next ten years. There is, however, reason to believe that they were written earlier than that. The Acts of the Apostles was written by the author of the Gospel of Luke. The Acts of the Apostles breaks off its story of the life of St. Paul with the year 63 A.D. Why did it stop so abruptly then? The natural reply would seem to be: St. Luke wrote then and had brought his narrative up to the time he was writing. If this be so, the Gospel of Luke must have been written earlier (compare Luke 1:3 with Acts 1:1), probably during St. Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea, 58-60 A.D. If this be true the Gospel of Mark and the other sources employed by Luke must have been written still earlier. Thus one could suppose that the Gospel of Mark was composed as early as 50 A.D., within twenty years of the Crucifixion. Indeed, one scholar has made a plausible argument that Mark 13:14 was written after the Roman Emperor, Caligula, in 39 A.D. had ordered his statue set up in the Temple at Jerusalem and before the death of Caligula in 41 A.D. If the whole Gospel were written at one time, the date of its composition would, according to this view, be between the years 39 and 41 A.D. or within ten or twelve years of the Crucifixion. While the majority of New Testament scholars are not yet convinced of the



correctness of this view, the writer feels its great force and is inclined to believe that it is right and that these early dates are probable. The investigations which have thrown so much light on the way in which the Synoptic Gospels were composed have made it clear that they are sources of information of high historical value and authority.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

WHEN we turn to the problem of the authorship and date of the Gospel of John we are met by many conflicting facts and opinions. There is now general agreement that this Gospel was written considerably later than the other three, *i.e.*, somewhere about 100 A.D.; perhaps a few years earlier, or possibly a few years later. Eusebius, about 325 A.D., records a tradition that it was written at Ephesus by the Apostle John at the request of other Christians, in order to tell what the other Gospels had omitted and that John, then at a great age, did what they asked. Wherever the Gospel is mentioned in early Christian literature it is attributed to the Apostle John. Those who depend on the external evidence only hold that St. John, the Apostle, was its author.

Others object that it is highly improbable that a man who had been one of the twelve Disciples, and especially one of the three who stood closest to Jesus, should have in his old age so far forgotten the historical perspective as to represent Jesus as publicly debating his Messiahship throughout his ministry, in the manner already mentioned, as the Gospel of John does. There are many other things which, in the minds of these scholars, it is equally difficult to suppose that one of the fishermen of Galilee wrote. This opinion is strengthened by a fragment of a work of Papias, the writer of the second century already mentioned, which states that the Apostle John was, along with his brother James, slain by the

Jews. If this be true, as is also implied by Mark 10:35-40 and Matthew 20:20-23, he must have been put to death before the year 70 A.D. and did not live to settle in Ephesus and write this Gospel.

Papias, who in his youth associated freely with the Christian circle at Ephesus and was deeply interested to inquire what the Apostles said, mentions a John whom he calls the Elder, or the Presbyter. It used to be supposed that it was in this way that Papias referred to the Apostle John, but it is now believed by a growing number of scholars that this Presbyter John was not the same as the Apostle (John was a common name among Jews and Jewish Christians), and some believe that it was this John who wrote the Gospel.

A theory advocated by one scholar is that the Disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13:23; 19:26), whom he believes to have been other than St. John, composed the Gospel. Others think that we cannot now discern across the centuries the name of the disciple who held the pen that wrote this wonderful book; that probably early Christianity was far more rich in marvelous and inspired personalities than we usually suppose, and that it is far more profitable to ask *why* the Gospel was written than to discuss the difficult problem as to *who* the writer was. All agree that the writer was a Jewish Christian, that he lived in Ephesus about 100 A.D., and that he had come into possession of a genuine tradition concerning Jesus.

When we question the Gospel itself as to why it was composed, it becomes clear that in writing it the author had several aims in mind. For one thing he strongly opposed the Jews. From the time of St. Paul there had been acute friction between the synagogue and the church, and there is evidence that this friction at Ephesus was especially fomented by a few individuals at the time this

Gospel was written. This accounts for the opposition to the Jews manifested throughout the work.

Another aim of the writer was to oppose the sect of John the Baptist. This sect, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 19: 3), continued to exist into the second century. The opposition of the writer of the Gospel of John to this sect is much less pronounced than that against the Jews. He seeks rather to show them that John was but a forerunner, who had himself testified to the temporary character of his mission, and thus to win them to Christianity.

Still another aim that was in the writer's mind was to oppose the notions of a sect called Gnostics. They were so called because they relied upon knowledge for salvation rather than upon faith. One of the chief articles of the creed of these people was that matter and flesh were too impure to come into contact with God. God, so some of them declared, was not really incarnate in Jesus Christ; he only *seemed* to be. At the very beginning of the Gospel, the ground is cut from under the feet of the Gnostics. It is declared that the Word, who was in the beginning with God and was divine, became flesh and tabernacled among men (John 1: 1-12)—an assertion horrible to the Gnostics.

In stating this the author did not indeed make a new departure in Christian thought. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Colossians, had in other words interpreted the nature of Jesus in the same way in order to oppose the Gnostics. The author of the Gospel of John was, however, the first to introduce the idea into the gospel story and he thereby set forth the meaning for the universe of the life of the Master. This meaning was, from the Jewish point of view, implied in the idea of the Messiah, for to the Jews the Messiah stood in such unique relation to



God that he occupied a central place in the history of the world. The Gospel of John expresses the same truth with reference to Jesus more nearly in the terms of the Greek philosophy of his day. If space permitted it could be shown that the writer had also other aims in mind—that he sought, for example, to correct certain tendencies of the Church of his time. Enough has, however, been said to indicate why the Gospel was written.

Whoever this writer was he was, next after St. Paul, the first Christian theologian. He was more interested in ideas than in outward events; in the words of Jesus than in his acts. We cannot, for reasons that will be pointed out later, accept his chronology. Tatian, the earliest writer on the life of Christ, who lived within fifty years of the time when this Gospel was written, did not do that, but rightly saw that the Passover mentioned in John 2:23 is identical with that spoken of in Matthew, chapters 21-26, and that John places these events too early. As one studies the Gospel of John, however, the conviction grows that the writer had access to a genuine tradition of the words of Jesus. He has, apparently reported this tradition in his own way, seizing upon the ideas of the Master and expressing them in his own words, but many of the ideas are too sublime for any one but Jesus to have originated. One instinctively feels that it would take one as great as Jesus to invent them, and, great as many early Christians were, such greatness was not theirs. If, then, we follow the Synoptic outline of the Master's life rather than that of John, we thankfully turn to him for some of the thoughts of Jesus that we treasure most and are grateful that he helps us, as he has many during eighteen hundred years, to appreciate the surpassing value of that unique life that was lived in Palestine.

## CHAPTER V

### WHAT PEOPLE THOUGHT OF THE WORLD WHEN JESUS LIVED

WE can not rightly understand the life of Jesus without spending a little time in thinking ourselves back to the point of view of the people of his time. He not only lived when there were no automobiles, telephones, railways, and telegraphs, but before men had any idea that the earth was round. The men of that period thought that the earth was flat and that the sky was a sort of bell-shaped firmament overarching the earth. The lightning that flashed out of the East was believed to shine even unto the West. It was thought that one could see from one extremity of the earth to the other, if only he could ascend a mountain high enough. Thus the Devil is said to have shown Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time from the top of a high mountain. The stars were thought to be shining lights set in the firmament, somewhat as we have electric lights on the ceiling of a room. The earth was believed to be the center of things; the sun was believed to revolve about it. Each night it was thought the sun passed by an underground tunnel from the West to the East, whence it emerged to rise in the morning.

The most westerly regions known to the people of that time were the shores of Africa and Portugal just outside the Pillars of Hercules, as the mountains on each side of the Straits of Gibraltar were called. How much of the country to the east the people of Palestine knew is un-



certain. More than three hundred years before, Alexander the Great had conquered western India. Two hundred and fifty years before, a king of India had sent ambassadors to five kings of the Mediterranean lands, but we have no evidence that the people of Palestine in the time of Christ knew anything of India. They knew fairly well the Roman Empire, which included all the lands about the Mediterranean. It extended to the Euphrates River at the point where that river approaches most nearly the Mediterranean. Between the Euphrates and the borders of India lay the empire of Parthia. This was fairly well known to Palestinian Jews, as many Jews lived in the Parthian dominions. Away to the far east across the deserts of central Asia lay the empire of China, then two thousand years old. A hundred and forty years before the time of Christ caravans had begun to trade between China and Parthia. From that time onward small quantities of Chinese goods reached the Roman dominions through Parthia, the Parthians acting as middlemen. Merchandise from China was, however, bought by the rich only, and it is doubtful if the name of China was known to any one in Palestine. Possibly vague notions of it may have reached Herod, but for the common people nothing was known of the world east of Parthia. On the north the Scythians of Russia were known; on the south Ophir, which seems to have included South Arabia and Somaliland. Small as such a world seems to us, to the Palestinian Jews it seemed great. When they went up to Jerusalem to their festivals three times a year and met Jews from Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, various parts of Asia Minor, Crete, Cyrene, and other parts of North Africa, Egypt, and Arabia, they felt that they were rubbing elbows with men from the ends of the earth.

The conception that the men of Jesus' time had of the phenomena of nature and of disease were even more different from those that prevail to-day than their ideas of the physical world were. We think of everything as controlled by law. The earth revolves about the sun in obedience to the laws of gravitation and motion; trees and plants grow in accordance with the laws of their nature; diseases spread and are cured in accordance with the laws of the multiplication of germs or of their destruction. To the men of the first century all such laws were unknown. The world was believed to be full of spirits. Every rock, tree, and shrub had its spirit; the air was filled with invisible beings. Some of these were good, some bad. All of them were more powerful than men. These spirits could do anything. They could enter into a man and give him sickness; they could kill him. They could take possession of a person and make him speak in ecstasy or make him act like a madman. All insane persons were believed to be under the power of demons or evil spirits.

In a word, the men of that time lived in an enchanted world. All things, they believed, were possible. Naturally stories of boundless marvels were told in all nations. Men expected miracles; they lacked the scientific spirit; they easily credited stories of marvels. There is in all ancient religions a kind of law of the growth of miraculous tales. They start from taking as a fact some striking figure of speech, or increasing the emphasis upon some providential circumstance, and end in a story that seems to be a miracle. Thus stories of miracles in every country attached themselves to all persons of unusual character and reputation, especially to all who gained a reputation for unusual sanctity. The atmosphere of that ancient world is preserved in the Arabian Nights Tales. One finds there the same unconsciousness of the limitations

placed upon us by the laws of time and space that prevailed in all the world at the time of Christ. Solomon can control spirits by his ring; hoopoes can see water under the earth as men see it in the bottom of a glass; a jinn may be now a gazelle and now a beautiful maiden.

One who would study the life of Christ scientifically must take account of this change of atmosphere, or, in other words, must reckon with the change in the theory of the universe which has taken place since then. This constitutes the most difficult and perplexing of the problems which face the modern student. The problem is, in brief, this: miracles are attributed to other founders of religions—to Zoroaster in Persia, to Gautama, the founder of Buddhism in India, to Vardhamana, the founder of Jainism in India, and to many others. Are the miracles attributed to Jesus more real than those attributed to others? If the prevailing theory of the world led men to expect miracles and easily to believe in them, may not certain features of some stories in the Gospels be due to this ancient habit of mind?

With reference to this problem people of to-day take three different attitudes. (1) There are some who insist that every word in our Gospels must be taken at its face value. These people think that all Biblical miracles are real and that all others are but fabricated stories. They believe that the accounts of miracles outside the Bible are imitations of the genuine Biblical miracles, and should not weaken our faith in them. Just as a false imitation of a thing implies that there is a genuine thing to be imitated, so the class of persons under consideration take the false miracles as a confirmation of those related in the Bible. (2) At the other extreme there are those who reject all miracles and who have little or no faith in the Gospels because they narrate miraculous events. (3) There are



those who believe that they discover by the study of many cases that there are certain laws that govern the growth of miraculous stories and who seek by applying these laws to find what reality probably lay behind the accounts of marvelous events.

With reference to certain of the miracles of Christ, *i.e.*, miracles of healing, there is now general assent on the part of most scholars that they really happened. Enough is known to-day of the power of faith to heal and also of the health-giving influence of inspiring, magnetic personalities, to make the healing miracles of Jesus altogether credible. In the possession of those powers of silent influence by which one mind or one person influences another for his good, Jesus surpassed all who have ever lived. When the insane and sick came under his power, it is no wonder that they were healed. This could happen in accordance with laws that we are only now just beginning to understand. We do not know much about them, only enough to convince us that such things do happen in this world.

With reference to what are called "nature-miracles," such as the miraculous multiplication of a few barley loaves and fishes so as to feed four or five thousand people, three different attitudes are taken by Christians who are all equally devout. (1) Some accept the account unquestioningly. Jesus was God incarnate and they feel no hesitation in believing that he overrode the natural laws that must ordinarily operate in the production of food. (2) There are others who are greatly perplexed by the narrative. They are impressed by the fact that, as we learn nature's laws by studying God's works, the laws of nature seem to be God's habitual ways of acting, and, so far as our experience goes, he does not vary them. Such people have tried hard to find some incident in har-

mony with the known laws of nature that would account for the rise of this story. There are at least six different explanations which have been proposed. Into these we need not go at this point. They are recounted and criticized in a later chapter.<sup>1</sup> We need only note now that the difficulty arises because our theory of the constitution and laws of the universe differs from that of the men who listened to Jesus and wrote the Gospels. It is a noteworthy fact, however, that the best scientists are less self-confident than they were twenty-five years ago as to what is and what is not possible. The discovery of the X-rays, by which photographs may be taken through seemingly solid substances, and the discovery of radium, which possesses powers which can act contrary to all the natural laws which were previously known, have taught those who love the truth to be cautious and humble in the presence of the unknown. These discoveries suggest that in time enough may be learned so that other marvels will seem as credible to us as healing miracles do now.

Whether this happens or not, it is important, in this connection, to remember that a physical marvel is not a guarantee of ethical and spiritual superiority. It was not in the time of Christ and it is not now. In the time of Christ people were in doubt whether miracles indicated the presence of a spirit from God or of a demon from Satan.<sup>2</sup> Even to them the evidence that a man was from God depended upon the ethical character which he manifested and the spiritual influence which he exerted over them. The same is true to-day. We might marvel at the skill of an acrobat, or the wonders that a man could perform with X-rays, radium, electricity, or some other ele-

<sup>1</sup> Chapter XLV, p. 278 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See Mark 3:22; Matt. 9:34; and 12:24; Luke 11:15, also Chapter XXXI of this book.

ment as yet undiscovered, and yet not be convinced by these marvels that he was a good, pure man, kind to his family, honest in business, or the kind of man one would like to have his daughter marry. Spiritual and ethical truth are really independent of physical miracles and always have been. Such truth is spiritually discerned. When men believe in miracles, an account of a marvel prepares their minds to receive spiritual truth, for such belief helps them to the worshipful state of mind in which spiritual truth may be seen. For modern men the worshipful state of mind is more often produced by other means.

In facing this problem one should seek the aid of parents and pastors. It is all important that each one form in his or her mind an image of Jesus against a background that will make him seem most real. It is only thus that his life—the most holy and powerful life for good that has ever been lived in the world—can have real influence upon us. As we live at a time when one theory of the world is passing away and another is taking its place, each must make his mental picture in accordance with what seems to him reality. Only so can he find Jesus a real Saviour—One who is able to help him in the actual difficulties in which he finds himself.

It should, however, be borne in mind by all that, if in Jesus, God has revealed himself as nowhere else in the world, as we devoutly believe he has, the great facts of that revelation are superior to any theory of the universe that may happen to be held at any period of the world's history, and are therefore independent of such theories. That God spoke with great power through those facts and through the voice of the Master to the men of the first century, can be doubted by no one who reads the history of Christianity in the first centuries of



its life. If Jesus embodied and revealed reality, however, that reality must be capable of being viewed through the medium of the world-theories of to-day—it must be able, when so viewed, to speak as powerfully and helpfully to the men of to-day as it did to the first disciples. If the facts are real, they will still speak as powerfully to the men of the thirtieth century when, in consequence of their enlarged scientific knowledge, they may have left behind our theories of the universe and have made better ones.

In other words, the educated Christian of the present day, who knows Christ by experience, who is certain of the blessedness that he gives to those who have faith in him, will be slow to declare that in order to obtain that blessedness one must, in scientific matters, accept the 'world-theories' that prevailed when the Gospels were written. He has such faith in Jesus that he believes him to be superior to all such theories; he knows that Jesus will outlive them all; he believes that through them all Jesus will make his inspiring and saving power known to men. He holds the real supernatural to be the ethically pure, the religiously perfect—the spiritual.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TEMPLE AND SYNAGOGUE

**I**N the homes of religious people the life and habits of the family are moulded by the religious institutions of the time. The religious background of the life of Jesus is, of course, the institutions and customs of Judaism. In theory the central institution of the Jewish religion at that time was the Temple with its ritual. The splendid temple of Solomon had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. The poorer structure built between 519 and 516 B.C. had in the reign of king Herod seemed dingy and rude in comparison with the splendid palace and fortress which he had built. Herod had accordingly torn it down in the year 20-19 B.C. and in the space of eighteen months had erected as the sanctuary a new and more splendid building on its site. The walls were of white marble with plates of gold upon the front.

In front of the Temple was an open court where, upon a ledge of rock over a sacred cave that for many hundreds of years men had regarded as holy, stood the altar of burnt offerings. This was surrounded by a court, the Court of the Priests. In this court was the laver that had replaced the brazen sea constructed by Solomon. A part, at least, of the Court of the Priests was on the east of the Court of Israel. This court may have encompassed the Court of the Priests on the north and south also. As to this point our authorities conflict. A low wall, a cubit<sup>1</sup> in height, marked off the Court of

<sup>1</sup> A cubit was about eighteen inches.

Israel from the Court of the Priests. Here the men of "The Congregation" of Israel could assemble to witness the sacrifices. To the east of the Court of Israel and fifteen steps lower than it, lay the Court of the Women. Women were not allowed to enter the Court of Israel. From an elevated seat on the east side of their court the women could watch the sacred ceremonies of the Temple. With the exception of this gallery the Court of the Women was open to men. Around these courts ran a wall forty-three feet high. This wall had four gates on the north, four on the south, and one on the east. A gate also led from the Court of the Women to the Court of Israel. One of these gates, either that leading into the Court of Israel or the one in the east wall, it is uncertain which, was made of Corinthian bronze. It was sometimes called "The Gate Beautiful" (see Acts 3:2), and sometimes in honor of its donor "Nicanor's Gate." This Nicanor was, of course, a Jew.

All these courts were on an elevated portion of the Temple area into which no Gentile was permitted to go. If one ventured into this area he was put to death. Lower than this area and extending over much of the hill-top on which the Temple stood was the Court of the Gentiles. This court was surrounded by beautiful colonnades. Though begun in 19 B.C., these outer structures were not all completed until 64 A.D., only six years before the Temple was finally destroyed. In the time of Christ the Temple (*i.e.*, the courts and colonnades) had been "forty and six years" in building (John 2:20).

While there were in this temple daily sacrifices, only people living in Jerusalem could attend them, and but few of them came to the Temple every day. Jews living in Galilee could worship in the Temple only on great festive occasions and then they had to make a long journey to do

so. This led to the evolution of the synagogues, of which more will be said shortly. There were three festivals for which the laws of the Pentateuch required Jews to come to Jerusalem. They were the Passover, which occurred in March or April, the Feast of Weeks (also called Pentecost), which came seven weeks after the Passover, and the Feast of Tabernacles, which fell in October. In the time of Christ Jews were so widely scattered that by no means all could observe this law, but strict Jews in Palestine doubtless made an effort to obey it. Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles were especially holy gatherings, and special effort would be made to attend these two in case it was not possible to attend the third.

Two other festivals had been added to the three great ones at the time of the Maccabæan struggle for Jewish independence, more than a hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ. One of these, the Feast of the Dedication (John 10:22), commemorated the cleansing and re-dedication of the Temple in December, 165 B.C., after the Syrians, who had defiled it, had been driven out of it. The Syrians had nearly suppressed the Jewish religion in Palestine and it was regarded as an event of such importance for the Jews to regain their Temple, that year by year in the Feast of the Dedication the event was commemorated. The other feast began in commemoration of a victory over the Syrian general, Nicanor, who was defeated and killed in March, 161 A.D. By the time of Christ this was called the Feast of Purim, which occurred a month earlier than the Passover. Perhaps Jews living in Babylonia and Persia had observed this feast as Purim before the Feast of Nicanor (or Nicanor's Day) was observed as a yearly celebration in Palestine. Be this as it may, by the time of Christ the two had blended into one. The two minor festivals,



Purim and the Feast of the Dedication, did not draw as many worshipers from a distance as did the three great festivals. Devout Jews living within easy reach of Jerusalem no doubt attended them faithfully, but those living in Galilee did not feel the same obligation to make pilgrimages to attend them as they did to attend Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

The distance of the Temple from most Jewish homes made it necessary that some other provision than the temple-services should be made for the nurture of their religious life. Accordingly in the time after the Babylonian Exile (586 B.C.) synagogues were built in every town and village. They were voluntary associations and could be formed by a minimum of ten male members. The synagogues were buildings, large or small, according to the numbers and wealth of those to be accommodated, in which on the Sabbath, and twice during the week, Jews assembled to hear the law and to be instructed in it.

At the beginning of the Christian era the service began by the reciting of Deut. 6:4-9, or at times verses 4-15. These verses beginning: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," were regarded by the Jews as their creed and are still so regarded. In Hebrew the word for "hear," with which the passage begins, is *shema*, so the Jews call this part of the service "reciting the *Shema*." The whole congregation said the *Shema*, after which some prayers were said by a person called "the deputy of the congregation" who was appointed for the purpose. After this a lesson was read from the Pentateuch and one from the Prophets. The lessons were read in Hebrew, but, as the people spoke Aramaic and Hebrew had become a dead language to them, a translation or interpretation followed so that the con-



gregation might understand what they had heard. After this a sermon generally was delivered, often based on one of the lessons of the day. The preacher was not always the same person. Any one had the right to explain the Scriptures. If an important-looking stranger were present he would be asked to speak. The service concluded with the benediction of Num. 6:24-26. If a priest were present the benediction was pronounced by him; if there were no priest, it was pronounced by a layman.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

**A** PART of the *Shema* (Deut. 6:4-9, especially verse 7) required a Jew to teach its words diligently to his children. The education of a Jewish child was, in obedience to this command, begun by the parents. The words of the *Shema* were written on little pieces of parchment and fastened to the lintel and posts of the doors of their houses, and such writings put into little boxes, called phylacteries, were bound at times to the forehead and wrists. Probably Jewish children learned their letters in order to read these little parchments. The *Shema* would be a child's first reading lesson. At an early age a child was taught a text of Scripture some words of which either began or ended with the letters of its name. Such a verse was regarded as a kind of special promise to the child and was inserted in its prayers. Children also soon learned certain Psalms that were sung on different days of the week or on the occasion of the great religious pilgrimages to Jerusalem. Such were Psalms 113-118, called the "Hallel" or "Praise."

The education begun in the home was continued in schools connected with the synagogue. Men skilled in the law, called rabbis, gave instruction in such knowledge as was requisite to read and understand the law. As Hebrew was a dead language, it required the learning of its alphabet, vocabulary, and grammar. Probably practice was obtained by reading from different parts of

the Old Testament. Jesus received his education in the ways here indicated. He was such a proficient reader that he could read the lessons at the synagogue service on the Sabbath (Luke 4: 16).

As the synagogue combined the functions of both church and school there were often collected in it other books than the great sacred rolls of the Law and the Prophets which were read on the Sabbath. These were closely guarded and were used only on public occasions. The needs of a school, however, would require separate copies of single books of the Bible; and there must have been many such. The line between sacred and secular books had not been fully determined at the time of Christ. Many books that the Pharisees at Jerusalem frowned upon were to be found in the libraries of country synagogues, and it is almost certain that the library of the synagogue at Nazareth contained the Book of Enoch.

In addition to Hebrew and the Old Testament the rabbis taught also something of the Oral Law. The Oral Law consisted of the traditions that had grown up in the effort to understand and observe the laws of the Pentateuch. For example, Lev. 19: 9, 10 forbids a Jew to reap fully the corners of his field; he is to leave them that the poor and fatherless may come and gather the grain and so have something to live on. By the time of Christ it had become a very practical matter for Jewish farmers to know just what this law demanded of them. How much must be left in the corner? If one forgot to leave it in the corner, but left some standing grain in the middle of the field, did he fulfil the law? If, when he took his grain home he forgot some of it, could he go back and get it, or must he leave that for a corner? If the poor did not come after his corner, how long

must he leave it? Could he ever go back and get it or must he let it spoil? If two men worked a field together, must each leave a corner, or would one corner suffice? If a man raised two kinds of grain in his field must he leave a corner for each? Did the law of the corner apply only to grains, or did it apply also to fig orchards, olive orchards, and vineyards?

The rabbis decided that a just man would leave one-sixtieth of a field as a "corner," though the amount might vary with the size of the field, the number of the poor, and the richness of the yield. If, however, one stalk was left standing the owner could not be said to have broken the law, since the sacred text did not define the size of a "corner." They also held that the law was fulfilled, if the proper amount was left in the middle of the field; also that the law applied to leguminous plants, to the tanners' sumac tree, the carob tree, nut trees, almond trees, olive trees, date palms, vineyards, and pomegranates. If a field was sown with two kinds of grain, but had a single threshing-floor, they held that the owner should leave but a single "corner" for the field; if he had two threshing-floors, he must leave two "corners"; also, if brothers divided a field, then each must leave a "corner"; if they worked it in common, then one "corner" sufficed for both. These and many other questions were discussed and determined. For example, an important practical problem was whether the "corner" must be left before the tithes were paid or afterwards.

In the same way the Oral Law contained traditional opinions as to the application of other laws in the Pentateuch—laws as to the observance of the Sabbath, vows, prayers, utensils, holy days, clean and unclean hands, etc. When later these discussions were collected and



written down, having been grouped under their different topics, they made sixty-three treatises. As the discussion on some of the laws was much more detailed than on "corners" it will readily be seen that the Oral Law constituted a large and intricate mass of learning. As to many of the points discussed the rabbis never agreed. Shortly before Christ was born, during the reign of Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.), two famous rabbis, Hillel and Shammai, flourished in Jerusalem. Shammai interpreted every law of the Pentateuch strictly; Hillel interpreted it liberally. Each had his followers and so founded a school of interpretation. The opinions of both schools had to be learned by pupils in the synagogue.

The method of teaching was this: The teacher sat, usually on the floor or on the ground or in the squatting position so common in the East, the pupils sitting similarly in a semicircle in front of him. The teacher would utter a sentence and the pupils would repeat it in concert after him. This would be continued and repeated until the tradition had been thoroughly memorized. Schools in which the pupils study aloud used to be called in the southern states "blab schools." The ancient Jewish schools might well be so called! The Hebrew word for "repeat" is *shanā*; a thing that is repeated is *mishnā*. Later when the traditions on the sixty-three topics which were treated in the Jewish schools came to be written down the whole was called the "*Mishnā*." It forms the basis of the Jewish Talmud.

One of the tracts of the *Mishnā* prescribes that at the age of five a boy should begin to study the Pentateuchal Law; at the age of ten, the *Mishnā*, and at the age of fifteen, the other discussions of the Talmud. We cannot be sure that any of these regulations were in force

when Jesus was a boy, or even that there were schools of the kind described, in Nazareth. Indeed, the regulation concerning the study of the Talmud must be later than the time of Christ. It is thought by many highly probable that the school system had been introduced into Nazareth before the time of Jesus and that provision was made for the study of the Written and Oral Law. It is true that at that time the Oral Law was in the early stages of its development, but it is certain that Jesus had come into contact with it, and that he highly disapproved of parts of it (see Matt. 15:6). It is probable that as a schoolboy he had sat at the feet of some teacher and been compelled to say over and over again traditional opinions that, to his growing insight, seemed to set aside commands of God written in the Old Testament.

Schools in country villages might be taught by the *Khazzan* of the synagogue, an officer who assigned seats in the synagogue, gave the signal for responses, and performed in general the duties of janitor. The teachers of the higher and more important schools were called rabbis, a title which means "great" or "distinguished." A rabbi was distinguished for his learning in the law. Probably it was this class who are sometimes called in the Gospels "lawyers." The rabbis whom the leading Jews recognized as such had probably studied in some one of the schools of Jewish law. The common people, however, applied the title to any teacher who attracted general attention. It was applied to John the Baptist and to Jesus.

Closely connected with the rabbis were the "scribes," whose principal work was to copy the Law and to write the little extracts from it on parchment which were needed for the phylacteries and the door-posts of the

houses. Scribes were from the nature of their occupation learned in the Law and their opinions were often appealed to. Just what the dividing line between them and the rabbis was in the time of Christ is not clear. Scribes sold the books and parchments which they copied, but rabbis were expected to earn their living by some trade and to teach for nothing. They were paid only when they gave their full time to teaching and then were given a mere pittance. Thus the great Hillel, mentioned above, worked as a wood-chopper for half a denarius (about eight cents) a day. Shammai was a builder. In later times it was said that a rabbi worked at his trade one-third of the day and studied the remainder of it.

## CHAPTER VIII

### JEWISH SECTS AND IDEALS IN THE TIME OF CHRIST

**B**OTH the scribes and the rabbis belonged to the section of the Jews known as Pharisees, *i.e.*, people who separated themselves from the common herd who were careless in their observance of the Law. The Pharisees preferred the name "Associates." After the Maccabæan struggle, disgusted with the high priests because they were also political rulers, they banded or "associated" themselves together to observe the Law. Religious parties are seldom called, however, by names of their own choosing, and the people soon called them Pharisees. The chief characteristic of the Pharisees was their zeal for the observance of the Law. It was this zeal that led members of the party to enter upon the professions of copyists and teachers. By the time of Christ they had become the most influential party in Judaism. The "people of the land," as the Pharisees called the common people in derision, held the Pharisees in great respect, and were as submissive to Pharisaical rules and decisions as their circumstances permitted them to be. Although the Pharisees were conservative in practice, they sometimes adopted ideas foreign to the Old Testament Scriptures. For example, in most of the Old Testament books there is no faith expressed in a resurrection or in an immortal life. It is only in Dan. 12:2-4 out of the whole Old Testament that such a faith finds expression. The Pharisees, nevertheless, ardently believed in a resurrection and made it one of their distinguishing beliefs.



In opposition to the Pharisees stood the Sadducees, a party or group consisting mainly of the priesthood and wealthy Jews who were worldly wise and who felt the disadvantage of insisting upon such a strict enforcement of the Jewish Law as to cut the nation off from all that was beneficial in the civilization of the world by which they were surrounded. The Sadducees were less numerous than the Pharisees, but were influential because of their wealth and position. They were less enthusiastically religious than the Pharisees. It is not certain what the name "Sadducees" means; possibly it means "righteous." If so, it was probably given them in derision. Liberal in their practices, the Sadducees were conservative in thought. Concerning a resurrection, they held to the general teaching of the Old Testament and denied the newer views embraced by the Pharisees. Whether there was or was not to be a resurrection was a doctrine hotly debated between the Pharisees and Sadducees (see Acts 23:6-10).

While the Pharisees and Sadducees were parties rather than sects, the Essenes can be more properly called a sect. They appeared during the Maccabæan revolt, 168-153 B.C., and were apparently an offshoot of the Pharisees. In some respects they were greater sticklers for the observance of the Law than the Pharisees themselves; in other respects they modified Jewish practice through foreign influences. These influences have been thought by some to be Persian, though others think that their source is unknown. The Essenes were brotherhoods, who lived in monasteries and did not marry. They had all things in common and one had to pass through a long probation before he could be admitted to the order. The members shared a common meal and common possessions; they could hold no private prop-

erty. They had priests outside the Levitical priesthood, but were very careful concerning all laws of uncleanness. All their food was prepared by priests; they avoided everything that could defile, even going so far as to avoid a novice of their own order, and subjected themselves to countless ceremonial washings. They engaged in manual labor, such as farming and the work of artisans, but avoided trade. They spent much time in contemplating angels and Paradise and in cultivating apocalyptic knowledge. They laid great stress on speaking the truth, and would not take oaths. They were kind to the poor and distributed much in charity. It is said that in the time of Christ there were about four thousand of them in Palestine. They are not mentioned in the New Testament.

Quite different from the Essenes were the Zealots or Cananæans. They took their name from a Hebrew word that means "to be jealous" or "to burn with zeal." It is the root used in the Old Testament when it is said that Jehovah is a "jealous God." "Zealot" is the Greek translation of it. The Cananæans were intense patriots. They burned with zeal for their country and their religion. They were so deeply galled by the fact that Palestine was subject to the Romans that they held it to be a religious duty to use any and every means, however violent or treacherous, to rid their land of the rule of the hated foreigner. From this volcanic group Jesus selected one of his Disciples, Simon the Cananæan. Later they developed into a band of assassins.

Another party (it cannot be called a sect), with which Jesus came into contact during the last days of his life, were the Herodians. They were a political rather than a religious party, consisting of the personal followers and friends of the dynasty of Herod. They did not, like

the Cananæans, seek to get rid of Roman rule altogether, but wished to unite the country once more under a king of the Herodian dynasty under Roman protection. This party was not a large one, but its members may well have been rich and influential.

In addition to these various parties, whose opinions and aspirations met, clashed, and seethed in the religious and political life of the time, there lived in the very midst of the land, in Samaria, the hated Samaritans already described in chapter I. The Jews regarded the Samaritans as very wrong-headed and therefore very bad. The religious antagonism of centuries had produced such deep feelings of aversion that "the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans." Jews living in Galilee, when they had occasion to travel to Jerusalem, as many of them did at the time of the great feasts, would not go by the straight road, as that would take them through the heart of the Samaritan country, but made a circuit to the eastward and traveled down the Jordan valley to Jericho from which they climbed up the Judean mountains to the Holy City.

Apart from the various parties into which the religious life of Palestine was divided, or rather interpenetrating them all in varying degrees, was the Messianic hope, *i.e.*, the belief that at some time God would send them a Messiah, or heavenly king, to deliver them from their oppressors and to establish on the earth the kingdom of God. Messiah means in Hebrew "The Anointed One"; "Christ" is the Greek translation of it. In early times the term "Anointed" had been applied to kings because they only were then anointed. In the time of kings Saul and David, the king was frequently referred to simply as "the Lord's Anointed" (see I Sam. 16:6; 24:6, 10; 26:9-23; II Sam. 1:14, 16, 21; 19:21).



If we should transfer the Hebrew word instead of translating it, the phrase would be "the Lord's Messiah." For three hundred years after this that was all the term meant; it was simply a way of referring to the reigning king.

In the time of the prophet Isaiah (740-700 B.C.), when the existence of Judæa was threatened by Assyria and the kings seemed to be incompetent, Isaiah began to prophesy of a time when God would send a wonderful king to rule over his people and would establish on the earth his ideal kingdom. The most important of these predictions are found in Isa. 9:2-7. and 11:1-9. This was the beginning of that forward look toward a Messiah or extraordinary king, that was destined to exert such an influence on later Jewish and Christian thought. Centuries passed, however, and the king did not come. Many times the Jews thought he was at hand; but he failed to appear. They were conquered by Babylon, then subjected in turn to Persia, Macedon, Egypt, Syria, and Rome, and still the Messiah did not appear. They imbibed a good deal of Babylonian story, and especially a story of how a god of light had had to overcome a great evil dragon in order that he might create the heavens and the earth, and they gradually took this as an allegory of the way the kingdom of God must be brought in. A dragon of evil was oppressing God's people and he must be slain before the kingdom of righteousness and peace could be established. In some quarters it was believed that Jehovah himself would appear to slay the dragon; in others it was believed he would send his Messiah to do it. Under this influence the expected Messiah was gradually transformed from an earthly king of superior power and goodness to a heavenly being who had existed with God in heaven from



before the creation of the world, waiting for the times to be ripe for his coming to earth.

No doubt the Jews were helped to adopt these views by contact in Babylonia with Persian Zoroastrians who had developed somewhat similar expectations of the coming of a Saviour. These expectations of a supernatural Messiah and the introduction of the Kingdom of God by a supernatural upheaval found expression in a class of books called apocalypses or "revelations." Such books began to be written soon after 200 B.C. and were very popular in certain circles until after 100 A.D. The writers did not, like the prophets, dare to speak in their own names the messages of encouragement, instruction, correction, and inspiration that they felt impelled to impart to their fellows. They knew that if they did, they would not gain a hearing. They accordingly adopted the literary expedient of putting what they had to say into the mouth of some well known person, who had lived long before and who was universally revered by Jews, and representing what they wished to say as something that God had revealed in a vision to this ancient worthy. It thus happened that seven apocalypses were attributed to Enoch, who in Genesis 5:24 is said to have been taken to God without dying; one to each of Jacob's twelve sons, one to Moses, one to Isaiah, seven to Baruch (Jeremiah's scribe), one to Daniel, one to Shealtiel, and one or more to Ezra. However much these works might differ in detail, the same philosophy underlies them all. Their authors believed that the world is in the grip of an evil power, and that this power must be miraculously destroyed, either by the direct intervention of God himself or by the coming of a miraculous Messiah, before relief can be afforded and the people of God find peace and happiness. In course of time

many of these apocalypses that were originally separate were combined into one work. Thus six of the works attributed to Enoch were made into one book; six of those attributed to Baruch, into another; those attributed to Ezra and Shealtiel, into a third.

While leading Pharisees frowned upon this kind of literature and skeptical Sadducees naturally had no use for it, the common people, oppressed by heavy taxation, cherished it. It is thought by some that the Essenes were especially devoted to it. In any event, there must have been a considerable reading public for this type of work, or so many apocalypses would not have been written. The chests in which rolls were kept in many a village synagogue must have contained apocalypses among other books. This was probably true of the synagogue at Nazareth, where among others, we believe the Book of Enoch, made by fusing together six different apocalypses, was to be found. Pharisees and Sadducees might disapprove, but the common people eagerly read these visions, imbibed their underlying philosophy, drank in their hopes, and waited for the realization of the kingdom of blessedness which they portrayed.

Into the manifold life of Judaism as here outlined, with its various religious opinions, its political and supernatural hopes, all of which were closely intertwined, and which met and clashed, not only with one another, but with the hard world of fact about them, Jesus, in the fulness of time, was born and lived.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE DATES IN THE LIFE OF JESUS

**I**F one takes up an ordinary biography, it is expected that it will give information as to the time when the most important events of the life described occurred. One expects to be told when the hero was born, when he died, and the date of any other important events. It is not otherwise with the life of Jesus. Great interest attaches to the dates of his birth, baptism, and death.

Some will doubtless be surprised that the date of the birth of Jesus is open to discussion. We live in the year 1920, or 1922, or 1930, or some other year *Anno Domini*, i.e., "the year of our Lord," a phrase that really means "since our Lord was born." We naturally infer, therefore, that Jesus was born at the beginning of the year 1 A.D. This natural inference is, however, a mistake. When Jesus was born no one recognized that his birth was so significant that events ought to be dated from it. In the different parts of the Roman empire at the time there were many local systems of counting the years. Two of these deserve special notice.

In the year 312 B.C., Seleucus, one of the generals of Alexander the Great, founded a kingdom, the capital of which soon became Antioch on the Orontes. This kingdom is generally called the kingdom of Syria. The subjects of this realm reckoned time from the beginning of the reign of Seleucus in the year 312 B.C. This is called the "Seleucid era" and for many centuries was

employed all over Syria and Palestine. One still finds inscriptions and old manuscripts in Palestine dated in this era.

Another way of dating events was to date them from the founding of the city of Rome. This was the era most generally employed in the great Roman empire. An event would be said to have happened in 710, or 750 (or some other number) A.U.C., *i.e.*, *anno urbis conditæ*, "the year of the founding of the city." These and other less widely used systems of dating continued to be employed for centuries.

No one thought of dating events from the birth of Christ until nearly six hundred years after his time, when a Roman monk, Dionysius Exiguus, proposed it. Dionysius as best he could counted up how many years had elapsed between the birth of Christ and his own time, and his computation was widely circulated. Two hundred years more passed, however, before the idea of Dionysius was carried into effect. About 800 A.D. the emperor Charles the Great (Charlemagne) took up the system which Dionysius had worked out and put it into force, and it has since made its way in the East, so that now it is employed all over Christendom. Dionysius in making his computation somehow made an error of at least four years. Probably the error is greater than that. Consequently we still have to seek evidence as to the date of the year when Jesus was born.

We are told that Jesus was born in the reign of Herod the Great (Matt. 2:1). Herod died in March in the year 750 A.U.C. Now the year selected by Dionysius Exiguus as the first year of the Christian era was the year 754 A.U.C.; Jesus was accordingly born at least four years before the year 1 of our era. It is, however, implied in Matt. 2:16 that the birth of Jesus had



taken place at least two years before Herod's death, and that it might have been earlier than that. We need not be surprised therefore to learn that it was as early as 6 or 8 B.C.

Again we are told in Luke 2:1 ff. that the birth of Jesus occurred in connection with a census taken by order of the Roman emperor Augustus. This census is further defined as the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria. These statements, long questioned by scholars, have in recent years received interesting illumination from documents found in Egypt. These documents were discovered at a spot where the inhabitants of an Egyptian city used to empty their waste-baskets, and consist of letters, receipts, accounts, the fragments of old books, and such things. They contain evidence that in the Roman empire a census was taken every fourteen years, and that they were established in all probability by the emperor Augustus. There was such a census in 20 A.D., a previous one in 6 A.D., and the one before that fell in the year 9 to 8 B.C. Perhaps this was the first one ever held, though Augustus may have inaugurated the series in the year 23-22 B.C. Evidence from outside the Bible seems to show that Quirinius was governor of Syria 10-8 B.C. and we know that he was also governor in 6 A.D.<sup>1</sup> The Gospel of Luke clearly indicates, therefore, that the birth of Jesus occurred in 8 B.C. We may accordingly fix upon this as the date we are seeking.

The great astronomer, Kepler, made use of "the star in the east" mentioned in Matt 2:2 ff. as a help in determining the date of the birth of Jesus. Kepler observed in the years 1603 and 1604 what astronomers

<sup>1</sup> There is some evidence that conflicts with this. See G. A. Barton, "Archæology and the Bible," pp. 436, 437.

call a "conjunction" of Jupiter and Saturn, *i.e.*, the two planets were very near together in the sky at night. In 1603 the conjunction occurred in the part of the heavens known as the constellation "Pisces," or "The Fishes"; in 1604 it was in the part of the heavens known as the constellation "Aries" or "The Ram." In March, 1604, Jupiter and Saturn were joined by the planet Mars, and in October of the same year all three planets were near a very brilliant fixed star. It occurred to Kepler that something like this may have been at the basis of the narrative of the "star in the east," and, reckoning back, he found that a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, with the later addition of Mars, occurred repeatedly in Pisces in the years 747 and 748 A.U.C., *i.e.*, in the years 7 and 6 B.C. Kepler thought that probably some bright star may have shone with them also. During the nineteenth century the calculations of Kepler were examined and confirmed by at least four other astronomers.

For five or six hundred years before the birth of Christ the peoples of western Asia who had come under the influence of the Babylonians had attached great significance to the movements of the planets and to their conjunction. They believed that omens could be derived from them. Men who were counted wise devoted themselves to the study of the stars and predicted from the movements of the planets and their nearness to one another what would happen. The mass of people sincerely believed that these predictions were true. Even if, as many modern scholars think, the story of the visit of the "wise men from the east" to the infant Christ is a legend that grew up after his death as a testimony to what people then believed him to be, it is probable that it had some basis in a wonderful appearance of stars or planets in the sky near the time of his birth. Even if one may

not attach much weight to the facts here presented, such weight as they have confirms the date of his birth as having been about 8 B.C. True, the conjunctions referred to did not begin until 7 B.C., but, as devout Christians looked back forty years or more, they would easily disregard the difference of a year.

Another date which we should like to know is the year that Jesus' ministry began. We may safely infer that it began a few months only after John the Baptist began to preach and to baptize. From Luke 3: 1 we learn that John began to preach in the fifteenth year of the reign of the Roman emperor Tiberius. Augustus died and Tiberius succeeded him in the year 14 A.D. It would therefore seem at first sight that the fifteenth year of Tiberius would be the year 28 A.D. The matter is not, however, so simple, for Augustus associated Tiberius with him in the government at some time before his death. This cannot have been later than 13 A.D., and the great historian Mommsen, thought it was as early as 11 A.D. If it was in 11 A.D., the fifteenth year of Tiberius would be the year 25; if in 13 A.D., it would be 27 A.D. An Egyptian papyrus shows that in Egypt the reign of Tiberius was believed to have begun in 14 A.D., and it is probable that St. Luke intended by his statement to refer to the year 28 A.D. In what follows it will be assumed that John began his ministry early in the year 28 and that Jesus was baptized in the autumn of that year.

Another problem that confronts us is: How long did the ministry of Jesus continue? It has been noted in a previous chapter that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke would make the length of the ministry something more than a year, while the Gospel of John makes it more than two years, if not more than three. It will



be remembered that the years are marked in the Gospels by the number of Passovers that Jesus and the Disciples attended, or the number of Passover seasons that can be traced. The first three Gospels imply two such seasons (see Mark 2:23 and 14:1), making one year; the Gospel of John implies that there were three of them (John 2:23, 6:4, and 11:55 ff.), making two years, and, if the feast mentioned in John 5:1 were a Passover, there would be four of them, making three years. Which shall we follow? We ought to follow Matthew, Mark, and Luke, partly because they are the older sources, and partly because we can see how the Gospel of John came to differ from them. There is no real reason for believing that the feast mentioned in John 5:1 was a Passover. There is reason to believe that the Passover mentioned in John 2:23 was really identical with that mentioned in John 11:55. The reason is this: in connection with that Passover Jesus drove the Jewish traders out of the Temple (see John 2:14 ff.), but according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, this event occurred in connection with the Passover at which Jesus was crucified (see Matt. 21:12-17, Mark 11:15-19, Luke 19:45-48). It has been assumed in many books that Christ drove the traders from the Temple twice, but is this probable? Such an act would be a challenge to the Jewish rulers that they would not have been slow to take up. Had he given them this challenge at the beginning of his ministry, it is difficult to see why they did not exercise their power to have him punished at once. Had he performed this act at the beginning of his ministry, it seems probable that his life would have been even shorter than it was.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke represent Jesus as beginning his ministry somewhat unobtrusively. He did not



proclaim his Messiahship at once, but first sought to instil into men's minds something of his own thoughts and spirit; then he revealed his Messianic claim first to his disciples; and lastly he let it be known openly and came into conflict with the authorities at Jerusalem. This, as will be shown more fully later, is the method that a good teacher, who understands the capabilities and limitations of the minds of his pupils, would adopt. It doubtless represents the historical fact. As has been noted in an earlier chapter, the Gospel of John was written by one who had lost this historical perspective. He saw the divine in Jesus so clearly that he believed that he was above the need of ordinary principles of tactful teaching. He thought that Jesus publicly proclaimed his Messiahship at the beginning of his ministry, provoked the opposition of the Jewish rulers at once, and was in open debate with them about it through the whole course of his ministry. We seem justified, therefore, in supposing that it was this loss of historical perspective that led the author of the Gospel of John to remove the account of the driving of the traders from the Temple from the end of the ministry to its beginning. That he did so we have the warrant of the opinion of a very early Christian writer for believing. Tatian, who about 150-160 A.D. wove words of the four Gospels into one continuous story of the life of Christ, identifies the Passover referred to in the second chapter of John with that at which Jesus was crucified, described in John 11: 55 ff.

If now we follow Tatian's example, there are really but two Passovers mentioned in the Gospel of John—that of John 6:4, which must have occurred near the time the grain was ripe, as mentioned in Mark 2:23, and the Passover at which Jesus was crucified. John

would then support the other Gospels. We conclude, then, that the ministry of Jesus embraced but two Passovers. In other words, it was less than two years in length. If, as has been assumed on the authority of the first three Gospels the ministry of Jesus lasted but a year and a fraction of a year, the fact heightens in our minds admiration for his person and power. It was sufficiently wonderful to us that in a ministry of three years he should have so impressed his mind and thoughts on men as to have influenced the world more than any man has done, but to have done in a year far more than others, who lived much longer than he, did in a lifetime, places his uniqueness in new perspective and gives new emphasis to the words: "Never man spake like this man." If John began to preach during the summer of the year 28 (*i.e.*, after the Passover of that year), Jesus probably stopped by the Jordan to hear him preach when he, Jesus, was traveling to or from the Feast of Tabernacles, which occurred in October of that year. Jesus was then baptized. His temptation followed, and then his ministry began. If this computation is correct, the two Passovers that were included in the ministry of Jesus were the Passovers of the years 29 and 30 A.D.

It may be objected to these dates that Luke says that Jesus, when he began to teach, was about thirty years of age (Luke 3:23), whereas our reckoning would make him about thirty-five. It should be noted, however, that "about" is not a definite word; it is quite consistent with a considerable margin above thirty.

If the calculations made in the preceding pages are correct, Jesus was crucified in the year 30 A.D. A good deal of effort has been made to determine the year of the Crucifixion from astronomy. It has been done in this way. The Jewish Passover was celebrated on the fif-

teenth of the first month of the Jewish year, Nisan, (which would include parts of March and April). The Jewish months were "lunar" months, *i.e.*, they began with every new moon and lasted until the moon changed again. The 15th of Nisan would be at the time the moon was full in the month Nisan. The Jews began their day at sundown of the preceding day, *i.e.*, they reckoned each night as a part of the day following it. If, for example, the 15th of Nisan fell on a Friday, they counted it as beginning with sunset of Thursday and lasting until sunset of Friday. If, then, Jesus' last supper with his disciples was a Passover, he ate it on what we should call Thursday evening and was crucified on Passover-day, which that year fell on Friday. If, then, we can find when Passover fell on Friday during the years from 27 to 34 A.D., we may be able to test our theory of the date of the death of Jesus by astronomy.

The astronomical calculations are not difficult to make, but the problem is not so simple as it seems for two reasons. The first of these is that the Jews did not begin their new month until they had seen the new moon, and if it were cloudy when the moon changed their month might begin a day late. They had made a rule that no month should have more than thirty days, so that the beginning of the month should not be too long delayed by cloudy weather, but there is some uncertainty, nevertheless, as to when any specific month began. They did not keep weather reports, so we do not know whether in the year of Christ's crucifixion it was or was not cloudy at Jerusalem at the beginning of the month Nisan. The second uncertainty arises from the fact mentioned in a previous chapter that, according to the Gospel of John, Jesus' last supper with his disciples occurred on the day before the Passover. If

this be the historical fact, the Passover the year he was crucified fell on Saturday instead of Friday.

It is owing to these uncertainties that astronomy cannot on this matter give us an absolutely fixed date. Those with the requisite knowledge who have made the computations tell us that Jesus was probably crucified in 29, 30, or 33 A.D. As 30 A.D. is the year we had reached from other data, we conclude that in all probability that is the correct date.

It must ever be borne in mind that no one of the dates mentioned is absolutely certain. In a part of the evidence for every one of them there is an undetermined factor. In the present state of our knowledge, however, they are more probably right than any other dates, and we may tentatively take them as a working theory. Summarizing them, they are as follows:

Birth of Jesus .....	8 B.C.
John the Baptist began to preach ....	28 A.D.
Jesus baptized .....	28 A.D.
First Passover in his ministry .....	29 A.D.
Second Passover and Crucifixion ...	30 A.D.





BOOK II

THE LIFE OF JESUS BEFORE HIS MINISTRY

Chapters X-XVI



## CHAPTER X

### THE BIRTH OF JESUS

(Matt. I and 2; Luke 1:5-2:40.)

THE Gospels of Matthew and Luke agree that Jesus was born at Bethlehem in Judæa, the birthplace of Israel's great king David. It is five miles south of Jerusalem, and lies near the crest of a ridge that has an easterly and southeasterly slope. As one stands at Bethlehem he looks on the east down over fertile fields toward the great chasm in which the Dead Sea lies. Beyond are the blue mountains of Moab. The Dead Sea itself is hidden from view by the edges of the chasm in which it lies. To the southeast one looks off over the hills of Judæa. A conical mountain, three miles from Bethlehem, arrests the eye. When Christ was born this was crowned by a palace of Herod the Great, the ruins of which are still there.

The Gospels agree that Mary the Mother of Jesus and her husband Joseph were descendants of David, though, as was pointed out in an earlier chapter, they trace his descent through different genealogies. Both Matthew and Luke, as their text now is, tell us that not Joseph, but the Holy Spirit, was the Father of Jesus. The great majority of Christian people hold these statements to be literally true and believe that only thus can the possession by Jesus of that unique nature, which was in after life undoubtedly his, be explained.

A small, but possibly an increasing number of Chris-



tians, think that Joseph was the earthly father of Jesus and that the narratives in the Gospels which state the opposite are not, when understood, inconsistent with this view. They recall that in the Orient monarchs, even in their own lifetime, were sometimes said not to have had earthly fathers; that remarkable persons, such as Heraclides and Pythagoras, were said to be sons of a god; that great religious reformers, such as the Buddha and Vardhamana in India, were said to have had no earthly fathers; that Philo, a Jew of Alexandria, regards Isaac, Samuel, and others as begotten of divine seed, though they had human fathers; and that an early text of the Gospel of Matthew says that Joseph begat Jesus; that St. Paul says in one place that Jesus was "of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3); that in another (Gal. 4:4) he says that Jesus was "born of a woman, born normally" (for so some would render the words "under the law"); and that the Gospel of John speaks of him as "Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph" (John 1:45). They therefore urge that we have in the accounts of the birth of Jesus comparatively early tributes to the divine nature, of which Jesus was believed to be possessed, rather than strictly historical statements. Naturally this view does not appeal to many, and to many it seems irreverent, not to say blasphemous.

It should be borne in mind, whatever view a student takes as to this matter, that the evidence for the faith of Christians in the divine sonship of Jesus does not stand or fall with these early chapters of Matthew and Luke. If it could be demonstrated to us that it pleased God to make the body of Jesus as he makes other human bodies, it would leave untouched the great fact of what Jesus was, for the best evidence of what he was is found in what he thought of himself. What he thought of

himself and how he came to think this, will be set forth in a future chapter. His consciousness of what he was is the impregnable rock of Christian faith. Next to that comes the estimation in which he was held by those who walked, talked, and ate with him.

According to the Gospel of Luke, Joseph and Mary were living in Nazareth in Galilee when, about 8 B.C., the time for the census instituted by the Emperor Augustus drew near. In accordance with the custom which prevailed in the East, these sojourners in Galilee journeyed to Bethlehem, the home of their ancestors, that they might there be enumerated with their kinsfolk. One likes to picture this journey. It is pleasant to think of the Galilæan carpenter, in his long flowing garments, leading his donkey as he walks beside that on which rides his wife, or as he rides a little back of her on his own beast. One may still see peasants passing over the Judæan hills toward Bethlehem in a way that vividly recalls this journey of Biblical story. They reach the city; they go to the khan, which in Oriental towns takes the place of a hotel with us, but they have arrived late; they had been unable to travel rapidly; the descendants of David are numerous; from many towns they have flocked to Bethlehem for the census; and the khan is full. Such hospitality as the dwellers of Bethlehem could offer in their homes is also taxed to its utmost, and this humble family at last take lodgings in a stable.

To-day travelers are shown a grotto or cave under the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem which, it is claimed, was this historic stable. It is not at all impossible that it is the actual shelter which protected the Holy Family on that memorable night. The limestone rocks of Palestine are honey-combed with caves and to-day, as in all periods of Palestinian history, the peas-

ants use them, not only as shelters for their domestic animals, but sometimes as dwellings. Here was born the Child, that was destined to bring salvation to mankind. It is no wonder that within two or three generations of this time those who had come to appreciate the significance of his birth for the world believed that it had been heralded by an angelic choir, and that astrologers from the East had sought out this child of destiny to do him honor.

When eight days old the child was circumcised. The ceremony had for the Jews something of the significance of baptism with Christians. At the time of circumcision boys received their names, and Joseph and Mary called this child Joshua (or Jeshua), the Greek form of which is Jesus. The name Joshua comes from a Hebrew root which means "to save" and means "one who saves." The author of the Gospel according to Matthew believed that the name was conferred by divine direction given to Joseph in a dream before Jesus was born. In any event, the name appropriately expresses what Jesus has done for myriads of people.

Among the Jews the coming of a child into the world was such a wonderful event that a sacrifice was offered afterward at the Temple in behalf of the mother. All first-born sons, according to the Jewish law, belonged to God and had to be "redeemed" or bought back from God. The redemption-price was five shekels, and, according to rabbinic tradition, could not be paid until at least thirty-one days after the birth of the child. The sacrifice for the mother could not be made, so the rabbis ruled, until at least forty-one days from the birth day. It was not necessary that the mother and child should go to the Temple for either one of these. The father could pay the redemption-money to any priest, and the sacri-



fice for the mother could be offered by the father or by kinsfolk at some convenient time when they were at the Temple.

According to the Gospel of Luke, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the Temple and accomplished these two objects at the same time. It seems a natural inference that they had remained in Bethlehem for more than forty days. It is implied that they stopped in Jerusalem for the purpose when on their way from Bethlehem to their home in Nazareth. If a family could afford it, the sacrifices offered on such occasions consisted of a lamb and two doves or pigeons. If the people were poor, the lamb might be omitted. Joseph and Mary were poor, so they offered the pigeons only. Early tradition, as embodied in the Gospel of Luke, treasured, as an omen of the future mission of Jesus, words that a holy man named Simeon and a devout prophetess, Anna, are said to have spoken concerning him when, on this occasion, they met the Holy Family in the Temple. The words attributed to Simeon are given in the Gospel in poetic form, and are to this day often sung in churches. According to Luke, the Holy Family returned to Nazareth after the presentation in the Temple and lived the simple life of devout Jewish peasants.

It is at this point in the life of Jesus that the Gospel of Matthew introduces the story of the coming of the wise men from the East, which is said to have been followed by the slaughter by Herod of all children in Bethlehem under two years of age. Joseph is said to have been warned in a dream beforehand of this approaching massacre and to have fled with Mary and the child Jesus to Egypt. Such a slaughter of the children of Bethlehem, though quite in keeping with the character of Herod, who on his deathbed ordered the prominent men



of his kingdom to be slain at his death, in order that there might be mourning when he died, is not mentioned elsewhere, and the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt is inconsistent with the narrative of the Gospel of Luke. We are, accordingly, left in doubt as to the value of these traditions.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE EARLY CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

**N**AZARETH, where the childhood of Jesus was passed, nestles among the Galilean hills in a little valley just to the north of the great Plain of Esdrælon.<sup>1</sup> Low hills on the south of the village shut out the view of the Plain, but from the high hills to the north of it a beautiful view, not only of the Plain, but of a wide extent of country may be seen. Here were passed the years between the birth of Jesus and his ministry on which the Gospels lift the veil but once.

When Jesus was a boy, Nazareth was apparently not the prosperous village that it is now. At present various religious orders maintain establishments there and pilgrims from many lands visit Nazareth, each bringing it some slight business. It thus happens that to the modern visitor Nazareth presents a more prosperous appearance than most of the neighboring villages. All this is, however, owing to the veneration in which Christians hold the place because it was once the home of Jesus. When he was a boy, it was probably poorer and less prosperous than many of the surrounding hamlets. It was so despised that men said of it: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

A vital part of every Palestinian village is the spring—the source of its water-supply. In some cases the

<sup>1</sup> See Ch. I, p. 9.

spring is outside the village and at some distance from it; at Nazareth the spring is in the village itself at its eastern end. From time immemorial women have gone to the spring daily and carried home in large jars on their heads the water needed for household use. When the spring is in the village the women are fortunate. The land about the spring at Nazareth is the one spot which it is almost certain that the feet of Mary and of Jesus once trod. Mary must often have gone thither for water and Jesus no doubt accompanied her and played about the fountain with others as the visitor to Nazareth to-day still sees children doing. Over the spring itself a church was built about the end of the eighteenth century, so that now the water is conducted for some distance through the church to a little stone reservoir outside. To this reservoir the modern housekeepers of the village come as Mary used to come to the spring itself.

Naturally we should like to know the kind of house in which the family of Joseph, the carpenter, lived. It has, of course, perished long ago, but from the houses of peasants found in the various excavations made in Palestine we are able to form some idea of it. In the hill country of Judæa and Galilee the houses were built of stone; in the lowlands, of mud bricks. Probably the houses in Nazareth were of stone. The houses of the poor had but one room, and it is doubtful if that of the carpenter of Nazareth contained more. Roofs were made of stone for the better houses, supported by stone arches, but on the houses of the poor they were formed by laying sticks or brushwood across and covering these with a layer of earth a foot or two in thickness. The earth was hardened by being wet with water and, while moist, pounded or rolled with a stone. Some of the larger and finer houses with stone roofs possessed a

smaller room built upon the flat roof. In summer, when the weather was hot, this upper room was used as a sleeping apartment. The poor, who could not afford such luxury, often, if the width of the street on which they lived permitted, built in summer a lattice-work room in front of the house in which to sleep and covered it with boughs.

The furniture of the houses was of the simplest sort—a few earthenware dishes and water-jars, a few stone dishes, a mill for grinding cereals, an oven, some rugs or mats which served as beds, a lampstand, and a low stool or large flat stone which served as a table. Such, doubtless, was the furniture in the home at Nazareth to which our thoughts are now directed. The domestic activities of this home deeply impressed the youthful Jesus and later formed the core of some of his most effective sayings and parables.

Take the mills: they were of two kinds. One consisted of a saddle-shaped hard stone on which the grain was spread, and another was rolled over it to crush it; the other, of a flat stone hollowed out in the center, into which fitted a smaller conical stone, that could be turned half way around by twisting the wrist. To grind grain in either mill required two persons, one to feed it with grain and the other to do the crushing.<sup>1</sup> This work was done by women. Jesus had often watched them. One wonders whether as a boy he ever helped his mother or whether she had to secure the help of a neighbor to do the grinding until her own daughters were old enough to help her. It was this process that led Jesus to say: "Two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left." (Matt. 24:41. See Luke 17:35.)

<sup>1</sup> For pictures of these see G. A. Barton, "Archæology and the Bible," Figs. 81, 82, and 84.



Another important article of furniture was the oven. It consisted of a cylinder of baked earth about two feet in diameter and two feet high, closed at the top with a cover of the same material in which a stone or lump of clay had been embedded as a handle. It usually had no bottom except the bare earth. A fire was built inside to heat it, and then the bread, which consisted of flat discs, was put inside, either on clean pebbles or on a baking tray. Sometimes the bread was baked by smearing the dough over the outside of the heated oven and then peeling it off as bread when it had been cooked. The fuel might consist of dry fagots, dry grass, or even dry manure. In the humble home at Nazareth they often had to burn grass. Allusion to this is made in Jesus' reference to "the grass of the field which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven" (Matt. 6:30; Luke 12:28).

Before heating the oven—hours before—Mary "hid leaven in three measures of meal" to raise bread for a large baking for her hungry boys and girls (see Matt. 13:33). Jesus watched it rise; saw the bubbles form on top; saw the leaven work "until the whole was leavened." His boyish memory stored away this lore of bread-making to bring it out later in a parable.

The little boy was hungry. He asked his mother or Joseph for bread, and they did not give him a stone; he asked sometimes for an egg, and they did not offer him a scorpion; sometimes he asked for fish (perhaps fish sellers came up from the Jordan or the Sea of Galilee to Nazareth), and they did not offer him a snake to eat (see Matt. 7:9, 10; Luke 11:11, 12).

When mealtime came the low flat table was placed in the middle of the room and the family squatted around it as the natives still do in Palestine. If there

was cooked food, the dish containing it was placed on the table and all ate from it, each helping himself (see Matt. 26:23; Mark 14:20).

As night came on the little flat clay lamp, filled with olive oil, was brought out, lighted, and put on the lamp-stand (see Matt. 5:15). It sent forth a dim, flickering, feeble light, but the house was small and was all in one room, and it "gave light to all who were in the house." Later the table and oven were put aside and the mats or rugs which served as beds were brought out and unrolled on the floor. Skins were spread over these and the family lay down to sleep, covered by the heavier garments they had worn during the day. When this was done the door was shut for the night and no one could be admitted. The boy Jesus, when a man, remembered that one night a neighbor of theirs had come to borrow bread. A guest from a distance, a friend of the neighbor, had unexpectedly arrived late, and the neighbor's children had eaten all the bread, so that there was nothing to set before the guest. It was inconvenient for Joseph to get up, unfasten the door, find the bread, and give it to him, but, like a kindly neighbor, he did not refuse. The carpenter's family fortunately had the bread on hand (see Luke 11:5-8).

These and many other things about the household impressed the keen-minded boy. He watched his mother as she patched the children's clothing and noted that old garments should be patched with old cloth. Perhaps Mary once used, when mending, some new, unfulled cloth, and, when it shrunk, it enlarged the original rent in the garment. He watched Joseph as he put grape juice into wine-skins to ferment, and learned that it was necessary to use a new strong wine-skin. Perhaps once Joseph had only an old one and the strain of fermenta-

tion burst it and the wine was lost (see Matt. 9: 16, 17; Mark 2: 21, 22).

The metal lamp-stand and other implements made of metal which the humble home possessed, even though they were heirlooms and were regarded as treasures, might in time become corroded with rust and be useless. Mary, like other women, apparently possessed some fabrics, perhaps inherited from her mother, which were highly prized and sacredly guarded. These the moths ate. Such circumstances were noted by the youthful Christ (see Matt. 6: 19, 20; Luke 12: 33).

On the Sabbath Joseph loosed the tether of the family donkey and led him away to water. A neighbor's ox or ass fell into a pit, and he and his neighbors did not hesitate to pull him out on the Sabbath. The boy, when large enough to run, watched the Nazarene shepherds bringing their flocks into the village, counting their sheep, separating the sheep and goats and shutting the fold for the night. Nothing escaped his eagle eye, and these common things later were made vehicles for the expression of spiritual truth.

## CHAPTER XII

### JESUS AT PLAY AND AT SCHOOL

**A**S Jesus grew he doubtless mingled with the children and joined in their games. What some of these games were we may infer from his reference to "children sitting in the markets (*i.e.*, open spaces of a town), and calling unto their fellows and saying, 'We have piped unto you and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented'" (Matt. 11:17). He thus tells us that children played at dancing sometimes. One or more pretended to play the music, while others danced. Dancing was characteristic of occasions of joy, such as weddings. Perhaps the children played at holding weddings. Mourning and wailing were characteristic of funerals. Children then as now played at what they saw older people do. Jesus, with his surpassing insight, did, no doubt, when a man, often watch children at their play with an understanding and sympathy which grown people do not as a rule possess, but it is not too much to suppose that as a boy in Nazareth he had joined with other children in similar games. It brings him nearer to us to think of his bright eager face and manly form moving with pure childish grace and gentle spirit in and out among the poor children of Nazareth, enjoying to the full their play, taking a "child's pure delight" in all the little pleasures that play afforded, bearing with those who were selfish or sulky and would spoil the play, and infusing into it all a cheer and comradery that helped each child to be his or



her best. The Gospel tells us that he was "subject to his parents." He was a dutiful boy. His after life shows that he was always pure, but he was evidently one who entered with zest into all that life in Nazareth had to offer to a child.

In these games the brothers and sisters of Jesus no doubt joined. It startles us, perhaps, to think of Jesus as having brothers and sisters, but the Gospels tell us that he had (see Mark 6:3) and they also tell us the names of four brothers. They were James (or really Jacob), Joses (really Joseph), Simon, and Judas (really Judah). The names of the sisters are not mentioned. Many Christians from early times have hesitated to believe that these brothers and sisters of Jesus were children of Mary. They have felt that it was unfitting that one who had been the mother of the Son of God ever had a child of earthly paternity. There are, accordingly, three theories with reference to the matter: (1) that the "brethren of the Lord" were really his cousins, being children of Mary the wife of Cleopas, whom those who hold this theory believe to have been a sister of the Virgin Mary. This theory is disproved by the fact that no family would name a second child Mary while the first was living. (2) Others believe the "brethren of the Lord" were children of Joseph by a former marriage. This is possible, but, to the writer seems improbable, since the brothers of Jesus appear to have been younger than he. (3) Still others believe that the natural meaning of the words of the Gospels is the true one and that these brothers and sisters were children of Joseph and Mary and were younger than Jesus. Whether one accepts the second or the third of these theories of the relationship of these children to Jesus, it is certain that they were brought up under the same roof

with him, so that they must often have been the companions of Jesus in his childhood's play, and shared in the childish laughter that sounded in those days through the streets of Nazareth.

Joseph was a carpenter, and, as a boy, Jesus must often have played about the carpenter's shop. We must not, however, picture to ourselves anything like the comfortable elaborate shop of an American carpenter. The shop of Joseph was in all probability even simpler than those one still sees in Palestine. These are only sheltered niches open on one side to the weather, when the carpenter is at work. Sometimes there is a sort of bench beside which the carpenter stands; sometimes the carpenter squats with his work on the ground. Among the carpenter's tools which have been found among the ruins of ancient Palestinian cities are axes, adzes, knives, saws, chisels, awls which, when heated, were used for making holes through wood, files, hammers, and nails. In the time of Christ well-to-do carpenters had tools made of iron, but poor carpenters often used stone hammers, and flint knives, chisels, and saws, as had been done in that country for centuries before the use of iron was discovered. When we recall what keen interest children take in all work with tools, how they follow eagerly each process, and what pleasure they derive from using chips, blocks, and shavings as playthings, we may be sure that however humble the carpenter's shop of Joseph, it afforded inexhaustible delight to the child Jesus and his playmates.

If the education of Jesus proceeded in the way prescribed by the Jewish leaders, his parents taught him to say the *Shema*, or Jewish declaration of faith (Deut. 6:4 ff.) when he was very young—perhaps before he could read. He was then taught the letters of the

Hebrew alphabet and began to read easy parts of the Old Testament in Hebrew. Even before he began this formal education he had drunk in much of the spirit of Judaism, for it was the very atmosphere of every Jewish home. For example, on Friday morning conscientious Jews rose early in order to make preparation for the Sabbath, which began at sundown on that day. The Sabbath was a day of festivity, but no work could be done on it. It was regarded as wrong to light a fire on the Sabbath, to light or extinguish a lamp. All preparations for the family feasting had to be done beforehand, preparations made for keeping the food warm, and the lamps trimmed and filled for Sabbath use. Joseph and Mary would rise early, go to the market-place and purchase any supplies needed, Mary would bring water from the spring, and then spend the day busily cooking for the joyous Sabbath. Even as a child creeping about the floor Jesus would be impressed by these activities and the odors of the food. Certain dishes were prepared especially for the Sabbath. One of these was a kind of pie, consisting of a layer of meat between two crusts of dough, in memory of the manna eaten in the wilderness. Two loaves of bread in token of the pots of manna were also to be placed on the table.

Before evening the toilets of the whole family had to be made, their nails cut, if need be, and their hair dressed, as all such doings were classed by the Rabbis as work and could not be performed on the day of rest. Toward evening the table was spread and covered with a white cloth, also in memory of the manna; the Sabbath lamp, without which the first meal could not be eaten, was lighted, and all made ready.

After dusk, when the Sabbath had really begun, the family went to the synagogue for the first service of the



Sabbath. At the conclusion of the service, they hurried home, greeting any whom they met with: "Good Sabbath!" On entering the home, a prayer was recited, and the evening meal eaten. This was as sumptuous as the circumstances of the family would permit. Perhaps in the home of the carpenter of Nazareth it was always frugal. In later times every Jewish family had, as a rule, a stranger as a guest at the Sabbath meal. Whether many strangers visited Nazareth and whether the carpenter's family often entertained them we have no means of knowing.

On the morning of the Sabbath Jews often slept later than on other mornings. Upon rising and repeating the usual morning prayers, they went again to the synagogue for the second Sabbath service. At this service the sacred books were brought out and the lessons for the day read from the Law and the Prophets. Upon the conclusion of this service the family returned home to the second meal of the Sabbath, at which they ate the dish prepared the day before and kept warm all night by artificial means. This dish was called *shallet*. At this meal sacred songs were often sung. During the afternoon there was a service of evening prayer. The hour of its beginning varied in different localities. Sometimes it began as early as half-past twelve, at others as late as half-past three. After the evening prayer the third meal of the day, which was much lighter than the other two, was served.

When one reared in a godly household, especially in a country household, recalls the vivid impression made upon him by the Sundays of his childhood with their bright impressive experiences, which, though but dimly understood, marked that day off from the rest of the week as a day of golden memory and mystic meaning, it



is not difficult to imagine how the Sabbaths celebrated in Nazareth impressed and moulded the sensitive spirit of this unusual child.

There is some reason to think that the education of Jesus proceeded up to his twelfth year according to the usual rabbinical program for the education of children. If so, he was at least by the time he was five taught the great Jewish confession of faith (Deut. 6:4 ff.) already mentioned. This was followed during the next five years by study of what were regarded as the most important parts of the Pentateuch.<sup>1</sup> Certain Psalms were also learned. These were those commonly sung at the time of the great festivals, especially the *Hallel*-Psalms or Psalms of praise: Psalms 113-118. It is evident from the way in which Jesus in after life alluded to the Law that the study of the Pentateuch made a deep impression upon him. Its great principles were his heavenly Father's laws; in its commands he heard the voice of his Father. He loved them; he thought about them; he followed out in his boyish way their instructions. If we could have the report of his teacher, we should probably be told that he was the best pupil in the synagogue school.

If the *Khazzan* of the synagogue who taught him was, however, a narrow-minded old Pharisee, we may well imagine that he was often puzzled and perplexed by the searching questions of his extraordinary pupil. A child's clear logic and insight often brush aside follies to which grown people become so accustomed as to confuse them with eternal truth, and with the child's "Why?" not only drive the teacher to his wit's end but often reveal to him, if he has intelligence to see, the weak spots of his

<sup>1</sup> That is, the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

system. Jesus was no ordinary child, and we shall not be far wrong, if we picture the old Nazarene *Khazzan* as often driven into a corner by the searching questions of the marvelous boy, and as doubtfully wagging his head over what such thoughts and questions might signify.

At ten Jewish boys began to study the Oral Law, which later became the Mishnā. The familiarity with this which Jesus later possessed makes it probable that he, too, went to school long enough to have something of this course. This study did not delight him as that of the Pentateuch had done. The Oral Law, while it grew out of a sincere desire to keep God's law, was often uninspiring in form and dreary in its details. Sometimes, too, its purpose was to set aside the rigid obligations of the Written Law. For example, the laws of the Pentateuch forbid a Jew to lend money to a fellow Jew at interest (Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:36, 37; Deut. 23:19, 20). These were laws adapted to an agricultural people; they made commercial development impossible. The great Rabbi Hillel, who lived a little earlier than Jesus, invented a way of explaining these laws which virtually set them aside. According to this the Jews could avoid strict obedience to these prohibitions. It is this famous explanation of Hillel that has made it possible for the Jews to become a great commercial people.

Such evasions of the Pentateuch were looked upon by Jesus with great dislike. To profess to keep the Law while abolishing it, he regarded as hypocrisy. He later reproached the Pharisees with making of no effect the word of God through their traditions (Mark 7:13; Matt. 15:6). We are not, we believe, wrong in thinking that such differences between the Oral and Written Law were perceived by his clear mind when a child at

school, and that even then the problem of the relation between the two began to exercise his thought.

In the preceding paragraphs we have spoken as though the mind and character of the boy Jesus were moulded in part by his environment and education, in a way similar to the growth of other children. Some will doubtless think this irreverent. They hold him to be God incarnate, and they cannot conceive, therefore, of the existence of any likeness between him and other human beings. Such people forget that incarnation, if real, involves the possession of a human mind and an inner development that is really human. Anything short of this would not be an incarnation. This was the view of St. Luke, who tells us that "Jesus increased in wisdom" as well as in stature—a statement which implies at the start a lack of complete knowledge and wisdom. His humanity was real humanity; his childhood a real childhood. His growth proceeded as that of other children proceeds. Home environment, school training, and the religious services and ideals of the synagogue, all had their influence upon him.

Just how all this could be and Jesus be at the same time the eternal Son of God, we may not be able to say. Many devout Christians suppose that when he became incarnate he deliberately laid aside some of the attributes of divinity—among these, omniscience—in order that his humanity might be real. St. Paul believed that Jesus did this, for he declares that, "He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7). Naturally, this is a matter of faith. It lies in a region that the human mind cannot penetrate. As we proceed in the study of the life of Jesus, however, we find much that strengthens our faith that something like this he actually did. We

tread, however, on the safe ground of historical fact when we regard his boyhood as a real boyhood, his humanity as a real humanity, and also trust his consciousness that he was the Son of God.



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE BOY'S VISIT TO THE TEMPLE

(Luke 2:41-51.)

**A**T the age of twelve a Jewish boy became subject to the obligations of the Jewish Law. Up to that time he had been a child; now he was a member of the congregation of the synagogue, the obligation to go to Jerusalem three times a year to "appear before Jehovah" rested upon him, as well as the duty of obeying the other details of the Law. A boy's entrance upon these responsibilities corresponded to "confirmation" in some branches of the Christian Church. Fortunately for us, the Gospel of Luke relates one incident connected with this important period of the life of Jesus. It tells us something of Jesus' first visit to Jerusalem as a son of the Law. His parents were accustomed to go to Jerusalem every year at the time of the Passover to celebrate that solemn festival in the place God had chosen, and when he was twelve they took Jesus with them. So far as we know Jesus had not up to this time been any distance away from Nazareth since he was brought there as a baby.

If our chronology of his life is correct, this experience, which meant so much to the eager, sensitive boy, occurred in March or April of the year 4 A.D. At that time Archelaus, the incompetent son of Herod the Great who was Tetrarch of Judæa, had still two more years to rule before he became so intolerable that Augustus ban-

ished him to southern Gaul (now France). If, however, Joseph and Mary had ever had any fear of Archelaus, it had vanished by this time. In the obscurity of Nazareth the child Jesus had escaped the notice of the ruler. If the coming of the wise men from the East was an historic fact, it had occurred twelve years before; nothing had happened to disturb the peace of the kingdom meantime, and the incident was forgotten. Jesus could go to the feast and Archelaus would never give him a thought.

One likes to picture this first journey of the Christ Child. When one remembers with what eager pleasure one journeyed from his boyhood's home and caught some glimpses of the world, recalling the vivid impressions still engraven deep in memory, he can enter a little into the meaning of this first journey of the Boy of Nazareth. The company of pilgrims from Nazareth wound its way from the little basin in which Nazareth lies out into the Plain of Esdrælon and at first journeyed southward, passing the village of Nain on the higher land at their left. It then turned southeastward, because just across the Plain of Esdrælon on the south lay the country of Samaria, inhabited by a people who were heretics. Feeling ran high between Jews and Samaritans, and, had they gone straight ahead through Samaria, they might have been involved in quarrels. They might, too, be ceremonially defiled so as to be unable to partake of the feast. Soon after turning southeastward they passed at some distance on their left hand the village of Shunem, where the most beautiful girl in all Israel had once been found (see I Kings 1: 3, 4), and where at a later time there lived some friends of the prophet Elisha, whose son Elisha is said to have raised from the dead (II Kings 4). Farther on they passed to the north of the

city of Jezreel, once the residence of Ahab and Jezebel and later the scene of Jehu's bloody victory over the last of Ahab's house. Soon the mountains of Gilboa, which witnessed the defeat of King Saul and his death at the hands of the Philistines, rose high on their right hand. Rounding the base of Gilboa, the pilgrims could see at a distance to the left the city of Scythopolis, the Bethshean of the Old Testament. It was the deliverance of this city from the Ammonites that a thousand years before had made Saul king, and to the walls of the same city the Philistines, after the fateful battle of Gilboa, had fastened Saul's body. About four hundred years later some Scythians who invaded Palestine seem to have settled there, and the city was called Scythopolis from them. Sixty-three years before Christ the Roman general Pompey had found many Greeks settled there and had made it one of the cities of the Decapolis—ten cities that were given over to Greek culture and which were permitted a degree of self-government.<sup>1</sup> Architecturally these cities were much more beautiful than most of the cities of Palestine. They contained streets flanked on either side with beautiful columns, fine temples, and large outdoor theaters. The traveler may still behold the remains of the theater of Scythopolis. The pilgrims from Nazareth would not go near this heathen city, for to do so would incur such defilement that they could not eat the Passover, but we may be sure that the boy Jesus asked many questions about it as he saw its marble structures reflecting the rays of the sun.

From the base of Gilboa the little band went southward down the valley of the Jordan. High on their right rose the hills of Samaria; below them on the left the silver thread of the river Jordan—which is so

<sup>1</sup> See Ch. I, p. 11.



crooked that it runs two hundred miles which a straight line would cover in sixty—could be seen winding in and out. Beyond the river and the upward sloping plain of its eastward shore, rose the high lands of Peræa. When the party left Nazareth in the early spring morning the air had been cold; in the Jordan valley it was uncomfortably hot. Outer garments were laid aside, and probably the animated conversations that had cheered the morning gave way to silence as in the heat the pilgrims, overtaken by weariness, plodded on. As the company traveled southward in the tropical valley, where luxuriant fields of grain surrounded them and tall, tropical oleanders, laden with pink blooms, adorned the landscape, they could see, whenever they looked behind them, snow-capped Hermon, far to the north, raising its head and overlooking like a sentinel, with its touch of arctic splendor, the verdant, torrid valley in which the pilgrims were sweltering.

Three hours after leaving Scythopolis the party came to a copious spring. It is to-day called by an Arabic name which means the white or silent spring. It was probably here that the travelers halted for their first night. As they bivouacked under the open sky, the brilliant Palestinian stars looked down upon them. As the youthful Jesus looked up at the stars, he thought of the Heavenly Father who had made them and to whose house he was going.

On the second day's march the pilgrims passed the point where the Jabbok, flowing from the east, empties into the Jordan. Looking across the river they could see the deep notch in the hills out of which the Jabbok flowed. Perhaps they thought of the hordes of Midianites who, in the days of Gideon, had poured down this valley to invade and devour their land. A little farther



to the south they crossed the Wady Faria, up which the Midianites had gone in pursuit of their plunder. Toward night of the second day from Nazareth they passed the highest mountain that overlooks the Jordan valley on the west, the top of which rises 2,227 feet above the floor of the valley. It seems to have been crowned at that time by a fortress built about ninety years before by Alexander Jannæus and called the Alexandreion—a fortress that had been the scene of some dark domestic tragedies in the family life of Herod the Great. Here Herod had imprisoned his wife, Mariamne, and here he had buried his two strangled sons.

During the journey of the third day the little company passed two other places of note, Phasaelis and Archelais. The former had been built by Herod the Great and named for his brother, the latter by Archelaus and named for himself. Both were surrounded by famous palm-orchards, and their architecture, in contrast to the rough Jewish buildings of the time, was strikingly attractive. Probably the third night of the journey was spent at Jericho—a place famed in Jewish story for Joshua's capture of the city. The Jericho of the time of Christ was, however, a mile and a half from the spot on which the city captured by Joshua stood. Herod the Great had adorned it with a palace, had built a reservoir for its water-supply, and surrounded it with palm-trees, but in the time of Archelaus it had begun to fall into neglect. Archelaus had diverted some of its water to Archelais to irrigate the gardens about his own village. Jericho was, however, still famous for its palm-trees.

On the fourth day the little caravan, perhaps by this time joined by other companies of Jews from the Jordan valley and Peræa, began the ascent of the Judæan hills

toward Jerusalem. As they climbed these hills and the boy Jesus looked back, the Jordan valley, here at its widest extent, was spread out before him. Across its twenty miles of plain rose the rugged outline of the trans-Jordanic mountains, on which of old the tribes of Gad and Reuben had dwelt. At the south end of the broad valley appeared the crystal waters of the Dead Sea, reflecting the brilliant rays of the morning sun, its sluggish ripples seeming to wash the base of the distant mountains of Moab. One wonders what thoughts filled the mind of Jesus as he gazed upon the scene. Was he more impressed with the majestic beauty of the landscape, or did his thoughts go back to the traditions of Genesis concerning the destruction of the cities of the plain? Was he impressed with the power of his Father wondrously to carve out the great valley, erect the mighty mountains, clothe them with verdure, soften their outlines with the atmospheric blue which always tinges them when viewed from a distance—a blue almost without equal in Western lands—and touch them with the glory of the morning sun? Or did he think rather of the story of the cities, and reflect upon the laws of God—how he punishes sin and how those who thwart his will inevitably perish?

Westward and upward the cavalcade proceeded, over rocky and barren hills, strewn with stones and flint. When about half way up to Jerusalem, as the party passed over a ridge, the top of the Mount of Olives became visible far above them to the west. Probably Joseph or Mary pointed out to Jesus that just behind the peak of that mountain lay the Sacred City. His heart would beat faster as he pressed eagerly forward, little thinking, perhaps, how in subsequent centuries men of many races would look with reverential interest upon

that mountain because of its sacred associations with him.

V As the company reached the eastern slope of Olivet it came to the village of Bethany, the home of a certain Simon, who had three children of about the same age as Jesus: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. In later life these three were special friends of Jesus. One wonders whether Simon may not have been a friend of Joseph, whether the family of Nazareth did not, during the Feast, lodge here as Jesus did during a similar Feast years later, and whether the friendship that meant so much to him during his weary ministry did not begin now. These are questions which we cannot answer. Perhaps the family pressed on over Olivet that very night to the city itself. Even if the family stopped for the night in Bethany, we may be sure that Jesus went before nightfall up to the top of the Mount of Olives to get a glimpse of the city about which so many associations clustered.

As one comes from the desolate wilderness of Judah over or around the slopes of Olivet to-day the view of the towers and domes of Jerusalem is extremely beautiful and impressive. In the time of Christ, when the Temple of Herod was still in full possession of its original splendor, when just west of it and above it rose the old palace of the Asmonæan princes, and farther to the west rose the massive palace of Herod with its towers and extensive gardens, it must have been much more impressive than it is now. If the Jerusalem of to-day, as one thus comes upon it from the east, even if it has been seen before, awakens strange emotions in the breast of a traveler who has beheld the great cities of the world, what must have been the feelings with which the Boy of Nazareth beheld it for the first time—the Boy who re-



garded it as the dwelling place of his Heavenly Father!

Of the details of this first Passover Feast we have no record. It was customary for several families to combine and form a "company." Such a company purchased a paschal lamb in common. At every Passover in Jerusalem there were many such companies. The lambs had to be slain "between the two evenings," which was interpreted to mean between noon and sunset. The lambs were killed in the Temple, where other sacrifices were slain. The Temple courts were crowded full, the gates were closed, then the priests killed the lambs of those who were in the Temple. Meantime the Levites standing on a raised platform recited the Hallel (Psalms 113-118). If the killing occupied considerable time, the Hallel was repeated. When the lambs were slain and bled, the owners took the meat home to roast it. The Temple courts were filled again, and the slaying began once more. This was repeated until everybody was provided with Passover meat. At the feast, which was eaten after nightfall, the meat had to be all consumed and every member of the family must eat some of it. It was eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. At the time of Christ each Israelite was required during the eating of the Passover to drink some wine. The solemn period inaugurated by the Passover continued for seven days. Probably the pilgrims from Nazareth remained in Jerusalem or its neighborhood all this time.

Apparently it was not the details of the Feast that interested the boy Jesus so much as the Temple, its spacious courts, its throngs of priests and rabbis who were supposed to be deeply versed in the mysteries of God. Here he wandered day after day. He talked with the wise men, he thought about his Father, he stood thoughtfully before the Holy of Holies. Joseph and Mary al-



lowed him large liberty. Many acquaintances had come with them from Galilee, and they permitted him to mingle freely with all of these. So absorbed was he in exploring the wisdom of the doctors in the Temple and in meditating there, that, when the caravan of pilgrims started again for Galilee, he remained behind in the Temple. The story is reported as though he did it purposely, knowing that the family and their neighbors were starting for Nazareth.

Be that as it may, Joseph and Mary went a day's journey on their homeward way before they missed him. They supposed that he was traveling in the company of some of their friends. Probably some started earlier than others and during the day they were not all in sight of one another at the same time. When, however, they encamped for the night, probably at or near Jericho, Jesus was not to be found, so after an anxious night, Joseph and Mary with troubled hearts toiled again up the steep four thousand feet high, between Jericho and Jerusalem. On their arrival they inquired right and left for their boy, but did not find him. It was not till the next morning that it occurred to them to look in the Temple. Apparently during their seven days' stay they had not taken note of the deep fascination that the sacred precincts had for him. There they found him, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. The doctors were also asking him questions, which he answered in a way that revealed an insight far beyond his years, for "all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers."

When Joseph and Mary saw Jesus so occupied in these august surroundings, they were no less astonished than the others. Mary, like many mothers, felt aggrieved that her boy seemed to place other claims higher than her

own, and she exclaimed: "Child, why hast thou treated us thus? (For so we might render the Greek.) Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Jesus then said: "How is it that ye sought me? Did ye not know that I ought to be among the things of my Father?" This reply of Jesus is enigmatical, and interpreters have been at a loss to know whether it means "I ought to be in my Father's house," or "I ought to be about my Father's business."

Whatever may be the meanings possible to the words of Jesus, they show us that his soul was possessed of a very vivid consciousness of God. The fact that God was his Father overshadowed for the moment every other thought. The duty of learning more about God eclipsed for the moment every other duty. In that duty he was absorbed. He did not mean to be undutiful to his parents; apparently he supposed that they would understand. He seemed surprised that they did not comprehend the absorbing passion that possessed him. Apparently he took it for granted that they would know where he was and how he was occupied.

Such was Jesus when twelve years old. In his soul there was a vivid consciousness of God, his nearness and his Fatherhood. That consciousness seemed to prophesy the possibility of an unusual life and a religious mission. Still, he was a dutiful boy. He went back to Nazareth with his parents and was subject to them as any other Jewish boy would have been.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE SILENT YEARS AT NAZARETH

**A**FTER Jesus' first Passover in Jerusalem, the Gospels give us no direct account of how the years until his baptism were occupied. We have only a few indirect hints as to what the course of his life was. From these hints and from our knowledge of his surroundings and of him, we can put together a few facts and draw a probable picture.

Possibly after the return from Jerusalem Jesus continued for a time to attend the synagogue school. In later centuries Jewish boys began at fifteen to study the Talmud, or, to be more specific, the legal decisions of the rabbis who commented on the Mishnā. As these comments are all much later than the time of Jesus, they could not have formed a part of the course of study in the schools when he was a boy.

There is no doubt, however, that, as he grew older he entered more and more largely into the work of the carpenter, assisting Joseph in his various tasks. On this portion of the life of Jesus some of the Apocryphal Gospels delighted to dwell, but there is no reason to believe that their pictures are historical. They love to represent Joseph as a clumsy workman, who was always making mistakes that ruined his work, and Jesus as coming to Joseph's aid and performing a miracle which saved Joseph from disgrace and loss. We are beginning now to understand that that is not God's way. He permits men to learn by their mistakes; he

does not perform miracles to enable them to escape the consequences of their own stupidity or carelessness. We are to think of Jesus as helping in the simple parts of the carpenter's work, just as any other boy of his years might do.

During these years of silence it seems probable, as others have suggested, that Jesus often climbed to the top of the hill to the northwest of Nazareth which rises to a height of 1,600 feet above the Mediterranean Sea and from the top of which an extensive and beautiful view is seen. The top of the hill is to-day surmounted by a *Weli*, or the tomb of a supposed Mohammedan saint called *Sa'in* or *Sim'an*. It is well known now that when the Canaanites lived in Palestine a god called Baal was worshiped on the hilltop above every village, and this worship was continued in Judæa down to the Babylonian Exile. In southern Galilee it was continued down to the conquest of the country about 109 B.C. by John Hyrcanus I, who compelled the inhabitants to become Jews in religion. Afterward many Jews from Judæa settled in Galilee and it was, perhaps, at this time that the ancestors of Joseph and Mary migrated to Galilee and settled in Nazareth. Of course the worship of Baal on the hill above Nazareth was then discontinued, but, like similar hills in other parts of Palestine, the hill remained sacred in the estimation of the people. The sanctity was, as in other cases, accounted for by supposing that some saintly Jew had been buried there, and people often resorted to his tomb to pray. In later centuries many of these old sanctuaries were regarded as the burial places of Christian saints and still later of Mohammedan saints.

We cannot be wrong, therefore, in supposing that, when Jesus climbed the hill, its top was occupied by the



tomb (or the supposed tomb) of a saintly Jew named Simeon, for the name *Sim'an*, by which the possessor of the tomb is still known is an Arabic corruption of Simeon, and names in Palestine persist through many centuries. Who this Simeon was, we have no means of knowing; Simeon was a common name among the Jews. According to Luke 3:30 one of the ancestors of Jesus had, in the seventh or eighth century B.C., been named Simeon, but he can hardly have been thought to live in Nazareth. An aged Simeon had greeted Joseph and Mary when they presented Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem. Possibly he was in reality one of their neighbors in Nazareth who was afterward buried here, but that is not probable.

Whoever the Simeon may have been, he was regarded as a godly man; the people of Nazareth venerated his tomb; they kept it in repair; they white-washed it to make it appear pure and attractive. As Jesus, during the silent years at Nazareth often climbed the hill to pray, the tomb impressed him. He recalled the virtues of Simeon, the heroic deeds of other saints and prophets in Israel, whose tombs were preserved here and there, whose deeds were venerated, and whose virtues were extolled. He thought of the inconsistency of those who paid lip-homage to prophets and saintly men while they ordered their conduct exactly as the men did who brought the saints and prophets to their death (see Matt. 23:29, Luke 11:47). At other times he was impressed by the contrast between the outside of the tomb, so white and pure, and the inside, so different, and the contrast seemed to him exactly like that between the outwardly correct lives and the hateful hearts of some people he knew (Matt. 23:27).

One so sensitive as Jesus to the wonder and beauty

of the works of his Father can hardly have failed to look at the wonderful view that greets the eye from the top of this hill, which he so often climbed for the purpose of prayer. Across the hills to the west he could see a bit of the Mediterranean, dotted with an occasional sail, reflecting at times the sunshine from its blue waters, and at times angry with the winds of winter. To the southwest was the long low range of Carmel, the wooded slopes of which are of a different green from that of the adjoining plain. Eastward from Carmel in a long sweep to Mount Gilboa on the southeast the eye looks upon a grand panorama. The great fertile plain of Esdrælon is spread out in the foreground, while beyond it the numerous hilltops of the Samaritan country rise like billows, each, on account of varying distances, assuming a different tint of blue. To the left of Gilboa is seen a part of the wonderful chasm of the Jordan, beyond which rise the distant mountains of Gilead. As the eye sweeps northward the crest of Mount Moreh cuts off for a time the view of the lands across the Jordan; then above the low hills directly to the east of Nazareth rises the rounded top of Mount Tabor, the highest peak of the region, which reaches a height of 2,800 feet. In the time of Christ a village crowned its summit. North of Mount Tabor one could then catch a glimpse of Gadara, one of the cities of the Greek Decapolis, the marble architecture of which gleamed white in the sunlight. Then far to the northeast the eye was caught by the hoary head of Mount Hermon, snow-capped from November to the end of July, the highest peak in that part of the world. To the north one looks upon the multitudinous hills of Galilee, rising ever higher as they recede to the northward, and, in the time of Christ bearing on their slopes or sheltering in

their valleys some two hundred and thirty cities and villages. Such is the transparency of the air of Palestine that the details of this wonderful panorama stand out with vivid clearness.

In every age the affections of the Hebrew have entwined about the hills and valleys of this wonderful land, and some psalmists found in them a revelation of God (see Psalm 95: 4, 5). If the hills, the valleys, and the sea thus moved a poet to worship, it is practically certain that they had a like effect upon Jesus. Then, too, the landscape recalled many historical scenes, filled with patriotic and religious meanings. Looking from the hill of Nazareth across the plain to the northwest one could, in the time of Christ, see the walls and roofs of Sepphoris. It was the capital of Galilee. There lived Herod Antipas, who, under the Romans was the ruler of the land. Judæans might despise Nazareth, but its people were no backwoodsmen. They lived within three miles of the capital of their country. There was, however, little in Sepphoris to interest the youthful Jesus.

One can but think that he gazed much more often at Mount Carmel to the southwest, and marked with his eye the spot on its summit where Elijah, centuries before, had had his contest with the prophets of Baal. Or he may have looked a little to the east of that to Megiddo, where fifteen hundred years before, the armies of the great Egyptian king Thothmes had won their first great victory in Asia, and where nine hundred years later another Egyptian king had defeated and killed the good Judæan king Josiah. Near it he could discern Taanach where Deborah and Barak had defeated Sisera. In the same general direction he could spy out the hills that lay about the plain of Dothan, where Joseph's brethren had sold him as a slave to be taken to Egypt. Far to the



south he could distinguish the peaks of Ebal and Gerizim, about which hovered traditions of Abraham, Jacob, Shechem, Abimelech, and many others. Before him lay the great plain of Esdraelon through which had marched the armies of the great conquerors of the world, Thothmes, Seti, Raméses, Shalmeneser, Tiglathpileser, Alexander, and Pompey. Across the plain of Esdraelon on the foothills of Gilboa lay the city of Jezreel, famed as the residence of Ahab, which had witnessed the slaughter of Jezebel, and the bloody deeds of Jehu. Wherever he looked, voices from the past spoke to him of wickedness or of faith, of heroic deeds, of high aspirations unfulfilled. If the scene on which he looked spoke to him of the Great Father, the history that it recalled must often have led him to ponder what that Father's purposes might be for the future. How would God lead his people? Who would their great deliverer be? When would he appear? With swelling heart and exalted thoughts the young Carpenter of Nazareth must often have descended from the hilltop to his work or to his rest.

Some years before Jesus began his ministry Joseph died and Jesus, the oldest son, became the sole support of the family. We learn this from Mark 6: 3, where, we are told, people said: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" Had Joseph been living, or had he died but recently, they would have said: "Is not this the son of Joseph?" In Palestine men were not called sons of their mothers unless the father, or he who passed as the father, had been dead for a number of years, during which the widow had been the head of the family. The passage, too, calls Jesus the carpenter, not simply, the carpenter's son. It consequently gives us a glimpse into the struggles with which the later portion of the silent



years at Nazareth were filled. There were four brothers, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judah, probably all younger than Jesus,<sup>1</sup> and at least two sisters. To win bread for these hungry children was no light task, and the task was not made easier by the conditions of the country at the time.

The Apocryphal Gospels<sup>2</sup> think of Joseph and Jesus as carpenters of such exalted reputation that Abgar, a king of a country by the distant Euphrates, would send them an order to make a throne for him; but all that is pure fancy. Abgar and Jesus were not really contemporary! The carpenters of Nazareth were simple folk, whose work was probably confined to making yokes for oxen, the wooden part of plows, making and putting up doors for houses and sheepfolds, and similar work. They were employed by the people of Nazareth and the villages immediately surrounding it. It was humble work, and the pay was small. We know that the wages of unskilled laborers at the time were a Roman denarius (about sixteen cents) a day. We do not know whether carpenters were paid more, but probably they were not. We do not know whether they were paid by the day or the piece. Probably the wages of Jesus as a carpenter did not exceed those of other laborers.

It is altogether probable that the family of Mary also cultivated a garden or a small farm. Most dwellers in Palestinian towns had small holdings of land outside the village, and those who did not have land of their own could easily lease a small plot. Food raised in the garden would help to supply the demands of the hungry children and would make the *denarii* which the carpenter's

<sup>1</sup> For different theories as to the relationship of these "brethren" to Jesus, see Chapter XII, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter II, for the names of some of them.

trade brought in go further. The cultivation of a small tract of land would not interfere with the satisfaction of such demands as a small town like Nazareth would make on its carpenter. It is not improbable that he who later became the sower of that seed which he defined as the word of God (see Mark 4: 14) had often himself sown wheat, barley, and millet on some hillside near Nazareth.

For some years, then, Jesus was an artisan; he belonged to the great army of the world's hand-workers. This links him in sympathy to all working people. The conditions of labor in his surroundings were not ideal. Wages were low, and taxes were heavy. Civil taxes were not fixed by law. The system known as tax-farming prevailed. An official was given the privilege of collecting the taxes. This official had to pay over to his superiors a certain amount, but was permitted to collect from the people as much as he could squeeze out of them. In addition to the political taxes, there were the Temple taxes of a half-shekel each year. In this obscure village, occupied with these lowly tasks, Jesus, to whom we now look as the Light of the world passed several years. Bravely he bore hardships; faithfully he toiled. If he ever complained there is no record of it. He was undistinguished at the time among the millions of the world's peasant toilers. We may be sure that he did good work. No doubt the carpenter of Nazareth had a good reputation. For his wages he gave value received. He never practised sabotage. His timbers and boards were well fitted together; his nails well driven. People from neighboring villages no doubt were glad to secure the services of so faithful a worker, but, after all, as much could be said of many another peasant soul in many parts of the world, who remained a peasant to the end.

During these years Jesus never permitted his work to cramp his life. Intellectually he made that life as full as the opportunities of the little village would permit. He was faithful to the services of the synagogue on the Sabbath, and, what is more, he was a faithful reader of such books as the synagogue library afforded. We know that he could read so well that he was often employed to read the lessons in the synagogue on the Sabbath, for once during his ministry, when he was in Nazareth on the Sabbath, the rolls were as a matter of course given him to read (see Luke 4:16). We know, too, that he had quietly read, pondered, and understood the Old Testament Scriptures in a way that was unusual among Jews of his class, for the Rabbis of Jerusalem at a later time are said to have marveled that one not trained in their schools should have his deep knowledge (see John 7:15). We may be sure that during these years he was often found reading the books of the Law, the rolls of the Prophets, and the volume of the Psalms.

Doubtless there were other books in the synagogue library that he also read. Two of these we can with great probability identify. One of them is the "Wisdom of Joshua, the Son of Sirach," now commonly called Ecclesiasticus. It was written in Hebrew about 180 B.C. Jesus read it, for in later years he took some thoughts from its fifth chapter, verses 1-5, and wove them into the parable of the "Rich Fool" (Luke 12:16-21).

Another book that he probably read during these years and thought much about was the Book of Enoch, or the part of it known as the "Enoch Parables," which may at that time have been still in circulation as a separate work. They had been written at some time between 95 and 79 B.C. This book was an apocalypse,<sup>1</sup> and, like

<sup>1</sup> An apocalypse was a kind of prophecy. Chapter VIII, p. 51 ff.



other apocalypses, was occupied with prophetic visions of the coming of the Kingdom of God. More than most apocalypses it concerns itself with a portrait of the expected Messiah. Of all the pre-Christian apocalypses known to us it alone applies to the Messiah the term "Son of Man" (see Enoch 46:1, 2; 48:2). In Dan. 7:13 the term had been employed to designate a human being to whom the Messianic kingdom was likened. This was in contrast to the fierce beasts to which the earthly kingdoms, mentioned in the preceding verses, had been compared. In the Enoch Parables, however, the term "Son of Man" means, not the Messianic kingdom, but the Messiah himself. Afterward, when Jesus entered upon his Messianic mission, he chose this term "Son of Man" out of all the titles applied to the Messiah as the one by which to call himself. One reason for this choice we shall note in a subsequent chapter. The fact that he chose it makes the probability great that he had read the Enoch Parables, and often thought about their meaning. In this connection another significant fact should be noted. In the Enoch Parables the Messiah is portrayed as a heavenly being who has existed in the presence of God in heaven from before the foundation of the world. Enoch, it is said, when an angel conducted him through heaven, saw the Son of Man there, inquired who he was, was told of his preëxistence, his justice, and his Messianic destiny, and that, when the time was ripe, he would descend to the earth. If Jesus became familiar with the Messianic use of the term "Son of Man" through the pages of Enoch, he must also have become familiar with the belief that the Messiah was a heavenly being, preëxisting with God, who would, when God saw fit, be sent for the establishment upon the earth of God's kingdom. The probability that Jesus read and often



thought about this apocalyptic work lends a vivid meaning to the Messianic claim that he put forth at a later time. The picture of the Messiah in the Enoch Parables helps us to understand what was involved in his claim to be the Messiah.

Thus, in cultivating the soil, in working as a carpenter, in reading, meditation, and prayer, the years passed until the brothers were grown, others could win the bread for the widowed mother, and his own manhood was mature.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

(Mark 1: 1-11; Matt. 3: 1-17; Luke 3: 1-23.)

**I**N the year 27 or 28 A.D. a great stir was created among the Jews of Palestine by the appearance of a new and wonderful preacher, John, called the Baptist. John the Baptist was a distant cousin of Jesus. John's father, Zacharias, was a Jewish priest, but John all through his life, so far as it is known to us, had made, not the priests, but the prophets his model. One prophet in particular, Elijah, was his hero. He would be like Elijah.

Almost nine hundred years before, Elijah had come into western Palestine from the east-Jordan lands and had begun to preach. In the east-Jordan country people have always been more like the Bedawin than they have in western Palestine. They have lived more in tents, have clothed themselves in rough sheepskins, and have often been satisfied with the sparse diet of the wandering Arabs. Before the Israelites conquered Palestine they had lived in a similar manner. The life of the nomad or Bedawin seemed, therefore, to the Israelites much more the kind of life that Jehovah, their God, approved than did the more civilized, settled, agricultural life of Canaan. It thus came about that there was a tradition in Israel that the highest type of prophet must be like Elijah.

Before John began to preach, therefore, he had retired to the wild uncultivated regions of Judæa above the

Dead Sea, which are known as the wilderness of Judæa, and had lived in communion with nature, in lonely meditation, and in prayer. He lived on such food as the wilderness afforded; according to popular rumor it consisted of locusts and wild honey. He dressed in a rough sheepskin, and during the warm summer months reduced his raiment to a sheepskin loin-cloth. After a period of such retirement and meditation, the length of which we have no means of guessing, John went to the Jordan valley, up and down which Jews traveled in passing from Judæa to Galilee and Peræa, and began to preach. The burden of his message was: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was a message designed to stir Judaism to its depths and to awaken in the heart of every Jew great expectations, and it was not long before the banks of the Jordan were thronged by Jews from every quarter, drawn thither by their desire to see the new prophet and to hear his addresses.

The reason why the message of John took just this form and created such a sensation is easily discovered. From the time of the prophet Isaiah onward the Jews had been expecting a Messiah, or anointed king, who should free them from foreign rule, set up a kingdom, and establish an extensive empire. It has already been pointed out how, as time passed, the expectation of a Messiah was transformed.<sup>1</sup> The expected king, at first simply an earthly monarch, became a heavenly being to be sent from the sky. Sometimes it was thought that God would himself come down and establish the kingdom. In any event, it was thought that the kingdom would be set up by supernatural means. There would be a great upheaval, accompanied by a terrible slaughter of Israel's enemies, and the righteous Jews would be re-

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VIII, p. 51.

warded for all their sufferings by being given, under God or his Messiah, rule over the world. During the eighty years and more of Roman rule the intensity of these expectations had increased; Jews were impatiently awaiting the great Day, which was thought to be near. These expectations John shared. This was why his message took the form that it did. The prophet Malachi had predicted that before the great Day should come God would send Elijah. Doubtless it was this that led John to imitate Elijah; he regarded himself as the heaven-sent herald of the kingdom of whom Malachi had spoken.

The Jewish people, fondly entertaining the hope that the Messiah would soon come to deliver them from Rome and, familiar with this prophecy of Malachi, were profoundly stirred by the appearance of John the Baptist in the rôle of a preacher. His dress and habits were like those of Elijah. Everybody who heard about him and could leave home flocked to the Jordan to hear him. "Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about the Jordan." John demanded not only repentance in preparation for participating in the coming kingdom of God, but an outward sign of repentance. That outward sign was baptism.

During the two centuries or more before the coming of Christ the Jews had attempted to convert the heathen world to Judaism. Those who in consequence of these efforts sought to enter Judaism were compelled to submit to certain rites. One of these consisted of immersion in water. It was a symbol that the person was cleansed of everything connected with heathenism. To this symbol John gave a new significance. He demanded that Jews should be baptized in token that they repented of all their sins and desired to participate in the kingdom of God. The eagerness with which Jews of all kinds



and from every quarter hastened to the Jordan to submit to this rite, designed originally for Gentiles, attests the depth of their yearning for the kingdom of God as they understood it.

John had the real prophetic spirit. For religious formalism, indifference, and sham he had no respect. He reproved self-righteous Pharisees and cold, formal Sadducees as vipers; he urged tax-gatherers to exact no more than their due; he exhorted soldiers not to plunder. With a simple, stern morality like that of Elijah, his preaching came like a fresh, healthy breath of air into the stifling atmosphere of ceremonialism and hypocrisy.

The fame of John soon reached Nazareth. We have no means of knowing whether there had been any close acquaintance between Jesus and his kinsman John. Jesus had been occupied with his work as a carpenter at Nazareth while John had been apparently for some years an anchorite in the wilderness of Judæa. Jesus had, in all probability, gone frequently to Jerusalem to attend the Jewish feasts. Perhaps John had come from the wilderness to do the same. If so, they doubtless had met in Jerusalem, but whether they had intimate talks about matters of religion and about their hopes for Judæa and the world we do not know. It would be interesting to think that they did. But whether Jesus had had intimate personal acquaintance with John or not, he now went to the Jordan to be baptized by him.

The exact time when Jesus did this is unknown, but we may suppose that it was at the time of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles in October of the year 28 A.D. The chronology of subsequent events lends to this theory some probability. The journey to Jerusalem from Nazareth lay through the Jordan valley, and it would be natural, as Jesus was pass-

ing so near, for him to turn aside and submit to the rite administered by John. The Synoptic Gospels imply that Jesus did this just as any other Jew might do it, desiring simply to do all that he could to be ready for the coming of the kingdom, but with no thought that it was his high destiny to inaugurate it.

In the Gospels of Mark and Luke we are simply told that Jesus came and was baptized by John. In these Gospels no mention is made of a conversation between them before John administered the rite to Jesus. Such a conversation was, then, not a part of the earliest tradition. Matthew, however, reports such a conversation. The author of Matthew perhaps inserted it from an oral tradition. He tells us that, when Jesus presented himself for baptism, John expressed surprise, saying: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Jesus replied: "Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. 3: 14, 15). If this is a genuine tradition, it goes far to show that the two cousins, who were destined to usher a new era in religion into the world, had met in Jerusalem and had talked freely about God and his kingdom. It is implied that in such conversations John had recognized in Jesus one greater than himself—one the depth of whose knowledge, and the purity of whose soul were such that it seemed to John a desecration to think that his ministry could confer upon Jesus any benefit—one by whom it would be more fitting for John himself to be baptized.

When Jesus was baptized, as he came up out of the water, he had a great experience. "He saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him: and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased" (Mark 1: 10, 11). In this Oriental imagery the Gospel of

Mark, our oldest source, describes an experience that took place in the soul of Jesus.

It was, indeed, a great moment in the life of Jesus, for the experience marked the beginning of his realization that *he* was the Messiah. It was thus a great moment in the history of the religion of the world. Saints and people of unusual religious capacity sometimes have religious experiences of great intensity. They become oblivious to what is going on about them. As in a flash they seem to see into the heart of things—the very heavens seem opened. Some new truth flashes into consciousness with such intensity that it seems to them that they hear a voice uttering it. This was such a moment in the life of Jesus, though his experience surpassed that of others.<sup>1</sup> All his life long he had had an especial realization of the nearness of God. At the age of twelve he had regarded the heavenly Father as a being as real and as vividly near as his mother and Joseph were. During the years of toil as a carpenter he had daily found refreshment in prayer and communion with God. Apparently he had come, as he observed other people, to understand that to those about him, God was not so real. He saw that their lives were not so immediately and fully refreshed by communion with God—that their

<sup>1</sup> Later evangelists understood the circumstances differently. Luke introduces the words "in a bodily form" before the words "as a dove" (Luke 3:22), to indicate his belief that there was an external miracle, and not simply an experience in the soul of Jesus. A similar tendency to materialize immaterial things is found in other passages of his Gospel. The author of the Gospel of John goes even further. To him Jesus was so absolutely God and so little human, that he could not conceive Jesus as having or needing such an experience, so he makes it an outward sign given for the sake of John the Baptist (John 1:32, 33). The Gospel of Mark, however, the oldest Gospel, undoubtedly reports more accurately the account of it which Jesus at Cesarea Philippi gave to his disciples, so we take it as the real history of the experience.



natures did not reach down or out or up as his did, and did not find God as he found him.

Until he was baptized, he had not understood just what this difference between himself and other people meant. He was familiar with the apocalypses; he had read again and again the Book of Enoch with its account of a Messiah who had lived with God in heaven, who had been seen by Enoch near God's throne in heaven, and whose glorious destiny had been fore-ordained by God before the foundation of the world, but, such was the reality of his humanity, it had never until now occurred to him that that was a description of him. If he ever thought of such a thing, he had regarded the thought as too strange to be true. What connection could there be between the life of a peasant carpenter and such a glorified, godlike being? Now, all in a moment, the truth flashed over him. It came with such intense vividness that it seemed to be proclaimed by a voice from heaven. He could no longer doubt it.

This was the meaning of his clear realization of God. This was why God had seemed to him to be so much nearer than other people found him. This explained why he received so much more from communion with God than others did. There were depths in his nature which were not in theirs. These depths and the undoubted experiences which had come to him from God, had been preparing him for a great work. In this moment of heaven-given insight he saw that that work was the work of the Messiah. Prophets and apocalyptists had spoken of that work in marvelous and supernatural terms, but whatever it might be, this voice from heaven had laid it on him. Language had impoverished itself to set forth the wondrous being and preëxistent career of the Messiah, but, whatever these words might mean,



God had said that he was that Son, that Messiah. This must be the explanation of the depths of his own inner nature. He must think of this; he must examine himself; he must test the call. So he went away into the wilderness to think it over. It was thus that there came to the Carpenter of Nazareth the call that changed the course not only of his earthly life, but of the history of the world.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

(Mark 1: 12, 13; Matt. 4: 1-11; Luke 4: 1-13.)

THE conviction that he was the Messiah, which flashed with such power into the mind of Jesus as he came out from the waters of the Jordan, amazed and bewildered him. He felt the necessity of being alone with himself and with God, to think over the dazzling and perplexing destiny to which he had been called. He accordingly went away into the wilderness that he might by prayer and communion adjust himself to his great task and its duties. The impulse that led him to the solitary wilds was so strong that in speaking of it afterward to his disciples he gave them the impression that he was "led" or "driven" thither by the Spirit.

To us in America, the word wilderness suggests a primeval forest, but in Palestine a wilderness is not a forest, but a region too rocky and too diversified by deep valleys or barren hills for cultivation. It was to such a region that Jesus went. The exact location of this wilderness is unknown, but for hundreds of years tradition has fastened upon a rocky mountain with steep sides about two miles west of the site of the city of Jericho. Part way up this mountain there is a cavern which, tradition says, sheltered the Master during these trying days of meditation, readjustment, and temptation. Of course there is no certainty that the tradition represents the

truth, but, if, as seems probable, John was baptizing in the part of the Jordan not far from Jericho when he baptized Jesus, it is not impossible that the tradition is true. The Arabs call the mountain Jebel Karantel. Karantel is an Arabic spelling of *Quarantana*, the mediæval form of the Latin word for forty. The name was given to the mountain in memory of the forty days of the temptation of Jesus.

At the present time a Greek monastery is built into the rock about half way up the steep sides of the mountain. There it clings like a swallow's nest to a barn. From the top of the mountain one gains a magnificent view. The Jordan Valley and Dead Sea are spread out like a map. Beyond the broad stretch of the Jordan valley, the hills of Moab and Gilead rise, bold, rugged, and beautiful, while in the far north, visible above the many lesser peaks which intervene, snow-capped Hermon lifts its hoary head. It is a most appropriate retreat for such meditation as Jesus longed for at the moment. If, however, it was really Jebel Karantel to which Jesus went after his baptism, he had little thought for the physical scene before him, even though his eyes rested on what is, geologically, one of the most marvelous works of God. Other and more momentous considerations filled his mind.

Some modern scholars have expressed doubts as to the historical reality of the accounts of the temptation. They say that periods of temptation are attributed to the Persian prophet Zoroaster, to Gautama, the founder of Buddhism in India, and to many others. They would have us think that, because a period of temptation and doubt seems to be a necessary part of the biography of a saint, therefore the tradition of the temptation of Jesus grew up from nothing, so that the story of his life might con-

form to the general type. The facts to which they refer are real facts, but their application of them exhibits a strange lack of insight. Zoroaster and Gautama, yes: all real saints of every religion have attained their sainthood only by inner struggle. They have pushed beyond their fellows and have grasped new truth only because they doubted, struggled, and agonized. It is a law of life in this human world of ours that

“The heart must bleed before it feels,  
The pool be troubled before it heals.”

If Jesus were a real man, of course his experience corresponded to this universal human type. If he were only a saint, he could not reach sainthood by any other road. If he were Incarnate Son of God, and the incarnation were real, there was no other path, except the path of doubt and temptation for him to travel. These considerations, so far from throwing doubts on the historical character of the narratives of the temptation, are the strongest proof possible of their truth.

To the wilderness Jesus hastened, deeply absorbed in thought. For a long time his mind was so occupied by thoughts of his high destiny and extraordinary duties, or so engaged in prayer and praise, that he forgot the demands of the body. At last he was awakened from intense absorption in thought by the rude demands of hunger. The fact that he could hunger startled him. It cast doubt on his whole conception of his new mission. Could he *really* be the Messiah and be hungry? A Jewish apocalypse, written perhaps while Jesus was still on the earth, shows us the Jewish expectations regarded the time of the coming of the Messiah as a time of great plenty. It says, when the Messiah begins to be revealed: “The earth will yield its fruits ten thousand



fold, and on one vine there will be a thousand branches, and each branch will produce a thousand clusters, and each cluster will produce a thousand grapes, and each grape will produce a cor<sup>1</sup> of wine. And those who have hungered will rejoice.”<sup>2</sup> With such conceptions connected with the coming of the Messiah, it is no wonder that Jesus’ hunger made him doubt his Messiahship. If the Messiah was to bring in a plenty of which such things could be imagined, could he, who was hungry and alone in a desolate wilderness, really be the Messiah? The real temptation was not the hunger. The real temptation lay in the doubt which hunger cast upon his new conviction of what he was and what he was called to do. Those who claim that Jesus was tempted by appetite, as weak and gluttonous men are tempted, miss the point entirely. The temptation lay not in the appetite for food, which was natural and right, but in the doubts which that unsatisfied appetite, when considered against the background of the Messianic expectations, cast upon the trustworthiness of the voice of God which had so recently, at the waters of the Jordan, powerfully and convincingly spoken to his soul.

Then there flashed into his mind the thought, “If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” Nothing is so abundant on the Palestinian hills as stones. As Messiah, Son of God, he ought, so men of that time thought, to be able to work any miracle. If he could by a word change stones into bread, he could easily bring in the era of plenty which was expected. At this point he suddenly recalled the great words of the Book of Deuteronomy:<sup>3</sup> “Man doth not live by bread

<sup>1</sup> A cor contained about 49 gallons.

<sup>2</sup> Apocalypse of Baruch, 29:5, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. 8:3.

only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, doth man live," and he realized afresh that the greatest need of mankind is not bread, urgent as the necessity for bread often is. The "words that proceed out of the mouth of God" represent God's will. They define the great ethical and spiritual laws of man's higher life. Obedience to these laws distinguishes men from animals. Abundance of food strengthens the animal in man; doing the will of God develops his soul. The crying need of the world was then, and still is, a clearer perception of the will of God and greater power to do it. The times in which Jesus lived were sadly out of joint—not primarily for lack of food, but for lack of obedience to the will of God.

Jesus thus perceived that the real test, as to whether the voice that had sounded in his soul, calling him the Son of God, spoke the truth or not, did not lie in his power to turn stones into bread and load men's tables with abundance, but in his power to do the will of God and to help others to do it. It was in accordance with the will of God that men should labor for bread; the discipline of that labor was a part of the Father's design for their education. He would not attempt to free himself from that discipline; he would not perform a miracle to relieve his hunger. But he was conscious that he could do the will of God. He felt able to help others to do it. Thus the doubt that hunger had cast on the genuineness of his Messianic call was dispelled and the nature of his Messianic mission had become clearer to him.

No sooner had this struggle ended, however, than another was begun. The train of thought started by his hunger had brought him face to face with the problem of the kind of Messiah he would be, and upon that his thought dwelt. All his countrymen, not to say all Jews

everywhere, expected the Messiah to come as an earthly king, who would establish a Jewish empire and make Jerusalem instead of Rome mistress of the world. He knew that, if he raised the standard of revolt against Rome thousands were ready to rally to it, and fling away their lives in the effort to set up that monarchy of which prophets had spoken, poets sung and apocalyptists written. The kingdoms of the world passed before his mental vision. For one brief moment, perhaps, the pomp and power of earthly dominion appealed even to him, then he energetically repelled the thought.<sup>1</sup> Empires were founded on force. Their rulers were descended from successful robber-barons. They were the supreme expression of the idea that bread or material possessions constitute man's supreme good. Such a monarch Jesus could not become. To do so would be to worship Satan. He energetically repelled the thought. He recalled other great words in Deuteronomy: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."<sup>2</sup> This he would do. As man's greatest need was to do the will of God, he would establish a kingdom in which God's will should be supreme. The dominion of this kingdom should rest on love, not on force; it should hold sway over the hearts of men by its power of attraction, and not over men's bodies through the power of fear. Its dominion should be achieved by love, applied through service and sacrifice, not by battles and bloodshed. Thus the solitary Nazarene put away forever the thought of becoming a military leader and establishing a monarchy like that of Rome or Parthia. He would take the slower and more lowly method of loving service, of friendliness

<sup>1</sup> Matthew and Luke place the second and third temptations in reverse order. Luke's order is here followed, as according best with psychological probability.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. 6: 13.



to the poor, of preaching and healing. He would present in all its matchless beauty the will of God to men's minds, he would disclose God's love to their hungry hearts until, attracted away from sin and drawn out of selfishness, men should voluntarily yield themselves to the rule of God, and the kingdom of God would be established. Perhaps Jesus did not at the time fully realize it, but the choice which he made, owing to the hardness of men's hearts, and the power of self-interest, led straight to the Cross.

Although in these two inward battles Jesus had determined the kind of Messiah he would be, there came to him in his lonely meditation one other tempting thought. So human was he that for a moment the thought came to him that he might apply some outward test in order to prove that he was really the Messiah. The thought that came to his mind was that he might go up on one of the highest parts of the Temple in Jerusalem and cast himself down, in order to see whether God would permit him to fall and be injured. A Psalm, familiar to him for many years, contained a promise addressed to one who put his trust in God. It may be translated as follows:

"He will give his angels charge over thee,  
To keep thee in all thy ways.  
They shall bear thee up in their hands,  
Lest thou hurt thyself upon a stone."<sup>1</sup>

If he were God's Son, he could not be permitted to fall. It would be an outward test. If to any of us the idea of this temptation seems at all grotesque, we must remember that Jesus lived in the first century, not in the twen-

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 91: 11, 12.



tieth. If, as we believe, he was God incarnate, he was incarnate as a man of the first century. He possessed a first century man's point of view; he would share in some degree a first century man's thoughts.

Once more Jesus recalled some great words of Deuteronomy, which would seem to have been one of his favorite books. This time the words were: "Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God."<sup>1</sup> In the languages of the Bible the words translated "tempt" mean "to make trial of" or "put to the test." The thought that had come to Jesus was that he should create an artificial situation so as to put God's word to him to the test—to compel God, if the voice at the Jordan had uttered the truth, to give him an outward proof of it. We do not put our friends to the test unless we have reason to doubt the sincerity of their friendship for us. Those who are always creating artificial situations to compel their friends to show their regard for them are most uncomfortable companions. They are not real friends. So Jesus saw that the thought that had come to him was in reality a doubt of God himself. He knew God. He could trust him as a Father. He would create no artificial situation to compel God to demonstrate the truth of that which the Father had spoken in his soul. He would go forward doing the great task to which God had called him and leave God to bless his trust with full outward proof in God's own way and time.

Thus, alone with God, Jesus fought with his doubts and conquered them. He no longer wondered that he, a carpenter from an obscure village, should be called to this high service. The inner convictions of his soul and his knowledge of God guaranteed that. As he examined himself he found depths in his nature which justi-

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 6: 16.

fied him in thinking that, whatever the reality of the extravagant apocalyptic language applied to the Messiah might mean, it was fulfilled in him. He now saw clearly that the apocalypses had sorely missed the point in their pictures of the Messianic kingdom. People who took those pictures literally were looking for happiness where it could not be found. It was his mission to disclose a higher and nobler kingdom—to lead his people and the world to a better happiness by leading them to the Father. So from the solitary wilderness of temptation he came forth to take up his sacred but superhuman task.

The story of this solitary struggle in the wilderness lay for months locked in the breast of Jesus. It was not till shortly before his crucifixion that, at Cesarea Philippi, he disclosed to his disciples the fact that he was the expected Messiah. It was then, we believe, that he drew aside a little the veil from his own inner life, and told the Disciples of the voice that had spoken to him at his baptism, of the doubts that had assailed him in the wilderness, and of the sure conviction and deep peace with which he had emerged from that struggle. Naturally the story took on the form and coloring due to an Oriental, first century, Jewish setting. It is, however, the one bit of autobiography in the Gospels.



BOOK III  
THE MINISTRY OF JESUS IN GALILEE

Chapters XVII-XXXV





## CHAPTER XVII

### THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY

(Mark 1: 14-20; Matt. 4: 12-22; Luke 5: 1-11;  
John 1: 29-51.)

**F**ROM the lonely wilderness, where he had fought with doubts and conquered them, Jesus returned "in the power of the Spirit." He was full of courage and of zeal. He had adjusted himself to his new work; his reliance on God was complete; he saw his way before him. The mission that he had undertaken made it necessary for him to stop working as a carpenter, but this he did apparently with no hesitation. The needs of a Palestinian peasant are few and he could, as the birds do, trust in God.

He first returned to the Jordan, where John was preaching, and began, apparently, also to preach to the crowds who thronged the banks of the Jordan to hear John.<sup>1</sup> To these throngs the burden of Jesus' teaching was: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the good news." By saying "The time is fulfilled," he told them that the years, that their fathers had said must roll around before the coming of the Messiah, had already passed away. He implied that the Messiah would soon appear, for "the

<sup>1</sup> The Gospels differ radically in their statements concerning the beginnings of Jesus' ministry. It is not possible to harmonize them and scholars differ as to which one to follow. The writer gives in the text what seems to him the probable order of events, but no one can be sure of the right order.

kingdom of heaven was at hand." It was a message very similar to that of John the Baptist.

While preaching at the Jordan Jesus became acquainted with two brothers whose home was in Capernaum in Galilee. They were Simon and Andrew. A third man who had come there to hear the Baptist also listened to Jesus and was greatly impressed by him. He is supposed to have been John the son of Zebedee, though this is not certain.

What conversations, if any, Jesus and John the Baptist may have had with each other, we do not know. The author of the Gospel of John believed that John the Baptist told some of his disciples that Jesus was the Messiah, but if the Baptist thought this now, he afterwards had doubts.

The work on the banks of the Jordan did not last long. It was interrupted by Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa, who arrested John the Baptist and threw him into prison. The cause of Herod's act was that John had denounced as sin Herod's marriage with Herodias, who was the wife of Antipas's half brother, Philip. She left Philip and married Antipas, and John the Baptist, endeavoring to purify the morals of the nation in preparation for the coming of the kingdom of God, had declared the marriage a sinful act. Herod accordingly had John seized and thrown into a dungeon in the castle at Macherus among the rugged hills to the east of the Dead Sea, where, deeply indented by crooked valleys, the broken edges of the land rise in steep cliffs toward the levels of the plains of Moab.

The arrest of John dispersed the companies which he had drawn to the banks of the Jordan. It was at this time that Jesus himself returned to Galilee and began his preaching there. He did not return to Nazareth to

live, but went to Capernaum, a town on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The reasons that took him to Capernaum were two. He had by the Jordan become acquainted with three men who lived there, men of whom he might later be able to make use in his work. There was also a more important reason. Capernaum was thronged with people; Nazareth was an insignificant place, and Jesus wished to reach people. This little lake, thirteen miles long and about eight miles at its greatest breadth, is said at that time to have had about it nine cities, each of which contained at least 15,000 inhabitants, and some of them more than this. The names of several of these are known to us. There were on the western shore Tiberias and Magdala; on the northern shore, Capernaum, Bethsaida, and perhaps Chorazin; Hippos, a little to the east of the Sea of Galilee, and Gadara, a few miles south of its southern end, were probably of the number. What the other two were has not yet been determined.

A little time appears to have elapsed after Jesus left the Jordan before he reached the Sea of Galilee, for Simon and Andrew and John the son of Zebedee had had time to reach their homes and to engage in their ordinary work of fishing. What Jesus was doing in the meantime we do not know, but it is probable that he was preaching along the way to people whom he found at or near the towns through which he passed. We have no account of such preaching in our Gospels, for Peter, from whom the information in the Gospels comes, had not yet joined Jesus, and so knew no details concerning these days.

It would seem that during this ministry Jesus, as at the Jordan, told the people in substance, "The time is fulfilled," and "the kingdom of heaven is at hand: repent



ye, and believe the gospel." He did not tell them that he was the Messiah, for he knew that, if he did, they would expect him to lead a revolt against Rome, and, in the days of earnest thought in the wilderness, he had determined that he could not be true to God and be that kind of a Messiah. It was necessary for him to awaken their Messianic expectations, and then gradually lead them to share his more spiritual view of the kingdom of God. We know from later passages in the Gospels that, in order to do this, he called himself the "Son of Man." In the Aramaic language which was spoken in Galilee at the time and in which Jesus preached, the words "son of man" meant "human being," and would be understood by most hearers to mean that. "Son of Man" had, however, been used in the Book of Enoch as a name for the Messiah. The term had in it, therefore, the possibility of suggesting to the thoughtful the idea that Jesus was the Messiah. He doubtless chose to use this term in referring to himself, for a reason similar to the one that afterward led him to employ parables in his teaching. Those who "had ears to hear" might "hear" and understand. Meantime those who did not understand would form no false ideas of the kind of Messiah he was. It was thus that he began his work, the work of giving men a more real belief in God as Father, of making people feel that God loves them, of awakening men to the desire for a more perfect human society—a society in which the will of God shall be done—a kingdom in which God shall really rule.

Going northward Jesus traveled up the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and early one morning came to a place near Capernaum where the fishermen, who had been out fishing all night, had come ashore with their fish for a market. People from the neighboring city had come out

to buy, so that quite a crowd of fisher-folk and their customers was there. He began to speak to the multitude and his words seemed so striking and wonderful that people crowded about him until he could neither speak comfortably nor make himself heard. Then he saw nearby two boats, in which were his acquaintances made days before down by the Jordan, Simon and Andrew. Nearby was another boat in which were James and John with Zebedee their father. These men were not at the market, for they had had an unsuccessful night; they had caught no fish. They were washing and mending their nets. Jesus accordingly stepped into the boat of Simon and asked him to push out a little from the shore, so that the people on the bank could be seen, and then, sitting in the boat, he taught the multitude. Just what he said on this occasion is not recorded.

When he had said what he wished to say to the people, he said to Simon, "Push out into deep water and let down your nets to catch some fish." Simon, who was also called Peter, said: "Rabbi, we have worked all night and have caught nothing, but at thy command I will let down the nets." To this day it is customary for fishermen on the Sea of Galilee, when out in their boats fishing, to be guided by the directions of one who is on the shore. Often an observer on the shore can tell by the appearance of the water where the fish are, better than one who is out on the lake. Jesus was, however, not on the shore, but in the boat, so that his directions seemed remarkable. As Peter and Andrew did as Jesus directed, they caught in their nets such a great number of fishes that their nets began to break, and they beckoned to the sons of Zebedee, James and John, to come to their aid. Even then the draught of fishes was so great that both boats had difficulty in getting them ashore.

Simon had been greatly impressed before by the preaching of Jesus, and this wonderful incident convinced him that Jesus was a holy man, possessed of divinely given insight, so he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Sir." Peter still shared the feeling that many Hebrews had had in the times of the Old Testament that God was so holy that, if a sinful man came into too close contact with him, the man would be destroyed. Thus Peter felt that it was dangerous for him, a sinful man, to be so near one who possessed such divine insight. Jesus, however, reassured him, and said: "Do not be afraid; follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." As a result of this call, reënforced by this fishing experience, Peter and Andrew, James and John, after they reached the shore, became Disciples of Jesus. It seems that they did not give up the fishing business and devote their whole time to going with him until later, but they were his Disciples and were often with him. However, for the time at least, they left their nets and boats, and James and John left their father and his fishing business, and all went on with Jesus into Capernaum.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A DAY IN CAPERNAUM

(Mark 1:21-34; Matt. 8:14-17; Luke 4:31-34)

**P**ROBABLY the events just related occurred late in the week, for the Gospel of Mark says, "They go into Capernaum: and straightway on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught." This teaching in the synagogue appears thus to have followed closely upon the call of the four Disciples, Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

The order of services in the synagogue provided for an address or sermon after the lessons had been read from the Bible. It was customary, if a distinguished Jew from another town were present, to invite him to make the address.<sup>1</sup> Naturally, therefore, the opportunity to speak at the synagogue in Capernaum was offered to Jesus. By the shore of the lake he had already spoken to many in a way that marked him as an unusual teacher, and we may be sure that the four Disciples had not been slow to tell their neighbors of the great numbers of fish Jesus had helped them to catch. When, therefore, Jesus was seen in the synagogue on the Sabbath, every one would wish to hear him.

The Jews of Capernaum met in a fine synagogue which had been built for them by a Roman centurion,<sup>2</sup> an officer in the Roman army, who corresponded in a gen-

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VI, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> See Luke 7:5.



eral way to a captain in a modern army. He was a sort of half-convert to Judaism, of which there were quite a number at this period, who had forsaken polytheism, and embraced the worship of Israel's God, but who had not submitted to the observances of the ritual laws of Leviticus. The foundations and floor of this synagogue have been discovered by modern archæologists.

As Jesus spoke to these Jews on that Sabbath, they were astonished at his teaching, it was so different from that of any rabbi to whom they had ever listened. We must remember that these Jews believed that God had spoken to and inspired the writers of the Old Testament who lived long before, but that the age of inspiration had long passed. It was the duty of a rabbi to explain what the sacred text of the Old Testament meant, but to speak as though he had any authority was, for a rabbi, an unheard-of thing. The rabbis as a rule simply passed out to their hearers dry-as-dust and hair-splitting explanations or more or less interesting stories. We do not know on what subject Jesus spoke that day, but we do know what his method was. He spoke the living truth of God in such a way as to lay bare the needs of men's hearts; he spoke of God as though he knew something of God; he appealed to his hearers to think for themselves, not to be bound by the past, but to dare to judge for themselves what was right. In comparison with the uninspiring addresses of the rabbis, the teaching of Jesus came like a breath of fresh air into a stifling room. No wonder the Jews in the synagogue were astonished at his teaching!

In the synagogue that day there was an insane man. At that period of the world's history, insane people were believed to have demons living in them. The demon was thought to get possession of the person, control his

will, and speak through his voice. Such is still the belief of the common people of Palestine. The writer, traveling with a party of Americans in Palestine, once came upon a group of men near the site of ancient Bethel, who were shouting and waving large clubs at a man in the center of the group. At an opportune moment one of them dropped his club and, rushing up behind the central figure, caught his hands and tied them behind him. When the writer asked why the man in the center of the group was so treated, he was told that he was possessed of a demon. When such people became violent, they were beaten or tortured in some way in order to drive out the demon, and, if this did not work a cure, the victims were driven from human habitations. Such poor outcasts often lived in caves and tombs.

The man who was in the synagogue of Capernaum that day must have been only mildly insane, or violent only at rare intervals, for the people did not cast him out, but let him stay in the congregation. As he listened to the words of Jesus, he was deeply stirred. Like Peter the day before on the lake, he felt himself to be sinful, and he felt uncomfortable in the presence of one who was evidently so pure and holy as Jesus. He accordingly cried out in the presence of the whole congregation: "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Nazarene? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Apparently the perceptions of his disordered mind were in some way so quickened that he felt that Jesus must be the Messiah.

We do not know whether Jesus shared the beliefs of those about him as to demon-possession or not. It may be that he did, for, if, as Christians believe, he was God incarnate, he was incarnated as a man of the first century and not as a man of the twentieth century. It is

possible, of course, that he accommodated himself to the thought and language of the people about him, because it was more important for him to teach them to do the will of God than to explain the nature of mental disease. It is also possible, as some investigators of psychical experiences believe, that people are sometimes taken possession of by the spirits of bad men, though this seems improbable. Whatever the reason may have been, he addressed the man as though the demon in him were real and he was speaking to it. He said: "Be silent, and come out of him!" The man uttered a loud cry and was restored to sanity. The word of Jesus and the healing influence that had gone out from his personality restored the man's mental balance. The congregation in the synagogue were amazed. The authority of the new teacher was indeed real. He not only spoke of the things of God as though he knew as well as the men of old knew, but even the demons recognized his authority and obeyed him! No wonder that they regarded him with reverence. His fame spread immediately.

When the service was over, Jesus with his four Disciples, Simon, Andrew, James, and John, went to the house of Simon and Andrew, which was in Capernaum not far from the synagogue. These brothers were both young men. Simon, who, it will be remembered, was also called Peter, was married, but whether Andrew was, we are not told. The name of the father of Simon and Andrew was Jonah. Probably he had already died, for the house was called that of Simon and Andrew. Possibly the mother of these brothers was also dead, for they were living with the family of Simon's wife. It seems probable that Peter and Andrew were orphans and that, when Peter had married, they went, contrary to custom, to live in his bride's family.



Be this as it may, they were living there, and, on this memorable Sabbath, they took Jesus home with them from the synagogue to the Sabbath dinner. Peter's mother-in-law was ill and lying on one of the rug beds in a corner of the common room of the humble home. Just what the nature of her ailment was we do not know. All that we know is that she had what modern doctors would call a "temperature." Jesus went and took her by the hand, after they had told him about her, and raised her up, and, from his calm, wholesome personality, which radiated health, hope, courage, faith, there went out to her healing. Her temperature dropped to normal; she felt well; she arose and helped in serving the midday meal.

In Oriental cities the houses are crowded one against the other. People live a good deal on the roofs and in the streets. This second wonderful cure, occurring on the same day as the curing of the lunatic, was soon known throughout the little town. News of it went from mouth to mouth, and great excitement resulted. It is almost impossible for one, reared in a family that has always lived where a doctor could be called in for every ailment, to realize what it means to live where skillful physicians are unknown. One has to travel in remote parts of countries like Palestine and get the reputation of being a physician, in order to understand it. People will eagerly flock to him with every ill that flesh is heir to; they will ask him to come and see people suffering from tumors, from paralysis, cancer, tuberculosis, leprosy; they will bring him deformed limbs and backs; his eyes will look upon a degree of suffering that would move a heart of stone. Such a traveler can understand why Capernaum was so stirred that Sabbath day long ago!



The people of Capernaum were, however, good Jews. They would not break the Sabbath. They had in their families many too crippled or too ill to go to Peter's house, but they would not carry them thither on the Sabbath. The Sabbath ended, however, at sundown, when, according to their accounting of time, the first day of the next week began. As soon, therefore, as the sun had set, they brought to Jesus all their sick, their crippled, and their insane, until it seemed as though the whole city had gathered before Peter's door. Their agony and their simple faith touched the heart of Jesus; he went out and mingled with the throng.

There has been in modern times much discussion of faith healing. Some have ignorantly maintained that it was the only right way to be healed; others have doubted whether real cures could be wrought that way. Intelligent experiments prove, however, that certain ills can be cured not only by faith, but by the confident expectation awakened by so-called magnetic personalities. Another large class of diseases are greatly helped by such faith and expectation. Since this is true of ordinary magnetic persons, it would be folly to doubt that Jesus could heal in this way. Every thing that we know of him confirms our belief that he could. There are some diseases that do not yield to such treatment. Faith does not set broken bones, nor do magnetic personalities make new limbs grow from the stumps of lost ones. Healing by faith and touch is real, but it has its limits.

The Gospel of Mark, based as it was on the testimony of Peter before whose house this crowd had gathered, says: "And he [Jesus] healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many demons." This testimony of an eye-witness is credible from any point of view. It undoubtedly represents the real facts. Jesus

moved through the throng. He spoke to them, he laid his hands on them, he gave them his sympathy, his love, his help. He healed all such as, under the limits of God's laws—limits which, though less circumscribed for him than for others, existed even for him—he could heal. Many went away healed and sane who had come with diseased bodies and disordered minds. All went away cheered by contact with his kindly love.

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke, written at a later time, tell the story with a very natural exaggeration. One says, "He healed all that were sick"; the other, "He laid his hands on every one of them and healed them." Such a heightening of the element of wonder in the closing incidents of this memorable day was, as time passed, inevitable. It is remarkable that Peter should, in spite of the excitement of these marvelous experiences have passed on to subsequent ages an account of it so simple and restrained that its details are all credible to a scientific student of the twentieth century.

## CHAPTER XIX

### A TOUR THROUGH GALILEE

(Mark 1:35-45; Matt. 4:23; 8:1-4; Luke 4:42;  
5:12-16; John 2:1-11.)

**T**HAT Sabbath day in Capernaum had drawn heavily upon Jesus' store of strength. To give one's sympathy, love, and healing-touch leaves the body more weary than physical labor does. In addition there is the drain on the spiritual life. After such an experience Jesus wished to be alone with God. He would refill the stores of power at the Infinite Reservoir of life. In the early hours of the following morning, therefore, while the other inmates of Peter's house were all asleep, he arose and went quietly away, out of the city, up to some of the recesses in the hills. There in prayer he refreshed his soul, and renewed his life.

When the people of Capernaum awoke on that Sunday morning, the great events of the day before were in every one's thoughts. Many thronged Peter's house to see again the wonderful healer. No doubt some also brought their sick, thinking that to-day his touch might heal them. Peter and Andrew could only tell the people that Jesus was not there. Thinking that Jesus was missing a great opportunity to advance his work, Peter, Andrew, James, and John tracked Jesus to his retreat and said, "Everybody is seeking thee." Jesus replied: "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, for I came for this very purpose." He and they, accord-

ingly, started on a tour through Galilee. This tour must have lasted for some weeks, for Mark tells us, "He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out demons." The Gospels have not preserved for us many details of the events of this journey.

It seems probable that the wedding at Cana of Galilee, mentioned in the second chapter of the Gospel of John, to which Jesus and his Disciples were invited, occurred during this preaching tour. The Gospel of John, it is true, places it earlier, but that Gospel allows no room for the temptation of Jesus, and there are other grounds for departing from its chronology. Weddings in ancient Palestine were quite different from such ceremonies among us. The bridegroom in gay attire, accompanied by his friends, went toward evening to the house of the bride. Upon their arrival they were joined by the bride and her friends, all, of course, in their festal garments, and the procession returned to the house of the bridegroom's parents to the accompaniment of music, songs, and dancing. In some cases, though this seems to have been rare, the bridal procession set out from the home of the bride's parents to meet the bridegroom and his friends on the way, and then all returned to his parents' home. After they had all reached the home of the parents of the bridegroom, the wedding feast was celebrated there.

Cana of Galilee is supposed to have been the same as the modern Kefr Kenna, five or six miles north of Nazareth, and Jesus, his mother, and his disciples are said to have been invited to the wedding. The Gospel of John, the only one of the Gospels which mentions this wedding at all, tells us that, when the wine gave out because of the number of the guests, Jesus, in order that the festivities of his friends might not be interrupted,



miraculously turned some water into wine. This is one of the nature-miracles which it is hard for many modern people to believe. The subject has already been treated in a previous chapter.<sup>1</sup> It is not necessary to repeat what has already been said. Even though the details of this account, written seventy years after the event, cannot at present be scientifically explained it is altogether like Jesus to be present at a wedding, and to mingle with people in their innocent pleasures. Just as he relieved their pain, cured their sicknesses, and drove away their ignorance by his wonderful teaching, so he accepted their invitations to dinner and to weddings, and shared their joys.

Sometimes among the rich the wedding festivities continued for a week, and, on rare occasions, for two weeks. The expense of such prolonged festivals was great, and could not be met by the poor. They usually contented themselves with one night of feasting. Doubtless the friends of Jesus at Cana were poor, and the wedding probably was soon over.

Another incident that was certainly connected with this preaching tour of Galilee was the cleansing of a leper, but we are not told in what part of Galilee it happened. According to the Levitical law, the Jews regarded skin diseases, which caused the skin to become reddish white or white, as leprosy as well as that more terrible disease which to-day passes under that name. Real leprosy is a terrible disease. It gradually unjoints the fingers and even larger joints of the body. Modern medicine is only now learning to control and cure it. Along with this true leprosy the Jews put ring-worm and a skin disease called *vitiligo*, in which parts of the skin become white.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V, p. 32 ff.

Any person afflicted with any of these was counted "unclean"; they could not go into the synagogue. Whatever they touched became "unclean." They accordingly had to live apart from their families. When they approached any one on the street, they had to cry, "Unclean! unclean!" and no one would draw near to them. The skin diseases might cause but slight suffering, but the uncleanness resulting upset one's whole life.

The skin diseases often got well. The Levitical law accordingly recognized that they might pass away, and made elaborate provision for successive inspections of the affected spot by the priests to see if the disease was cured. In case it vanished, the law prescribed that the man who had recovered should offer certain sacrifices, shave his head, bathe, and remain after that outside his dwelling for seven days, after which he could return home. Among the Jews of the time of Jesus people did not distinguish between the light skin diseases mentioned and the more terrible leprosy. It was to them one terrible disease. Every form of it made one unclean, it banished one from home, it sundered all ties, it made one an outcast. Then there was the haunting terror, as soon as the reddish-white spots appeared, that little by little the sickness might proceed to eat away one's hands and feet. So all that was called leprosy struck terror to the heart. It tore its victim from home and threw him into exile; it threatened a slow, painful, and horrible death.

The man who came to Jesus for healing during this tour of Galilee probably had one of the skin diseases which were counted as leprosy, but he had begun to suffer the social ostracism that leprosy imposed, and his soul was filled with the unspeakable horror that the possibilities of leprosy produced. As he heard of the won-

derful healer at whose word or touch so many illnesses had vanished, he came and kneeling before Jesus, besought him to help him. "If thou only wilt, thou canst make me clean," he said. From his heart Jesus pitied him. He put out his hand and touched him saying, "I will; be thou clean." As a result of the faith and expectation of the man combined with the magnetic and life-giving touch of Jesus, the physical defects in the man were rectified, currents of healthy life began to flow more abundantly in his veins, and he was speedily cured.<sup>1</sup>

The reputation of Jesus as a healer had greatly stirred the public mind. Already people so thronged him to be cured of sickness that opportunities to teach came to him less often. Jesus therefore told the man whom he had cured of leprosy not to say anything of his cure, but to go quietly to the priests and make the offerings connected with the putting away of his ceremonial impurity which the law required. The man thereupon left Jesus, but the restraint Jesus had put upon him was too great for his ardent nature. Everywhere he went he told people of the wonderful cure Jesus had so miraculously performed. The fame of it spread like fire, with the result that Jesus could only approach the towns *incognito*. If people recognized him in a city, the crowd became unbearable. So for a time Jesus remained out in the open country and people came from every direction to hear him and to be healed by him.

<sup>1</sup> The word "straightway" in the Gospel does not mean that instantaneously there was entire recovery, but that recovery was rapid.

## CHAPTER XX

### BY THE SEA OF GALILEE AGAIN

(Mark 2: 1-17; Matt. 9: 1-13; Luke 5: 27-32.)

FROM this tour through Galilee Jesus, after a time, returned to Capernaum, and rumor soon informed the dwellers in the city that he had come home, for so we might render the Greek of Mark. We are probably to understand that he had returned to the house of Peter and Andrew, whose house in Capernaum would, under all the circumstances, naturally be, when he was there, his home. The recollection of the memorable day, when he had healed so many of them, was vivid in their minds, so a considerable company of the people of Capernaum collected before the house, and Jesus, coming to the door of the house, began to address them. As he spoke the people sat down on the ground or squatted in the street, as people in Palestine may still be seen doing.

There were some in Capernaum who were not so much interested in Jesus' teaching as in his power to heal. Some of these had a friend who was partially paralyzed, and four of them brought him on a mattress or rug, hoping to bring him into the presence of Jesus. When they found the street blocked by the crowd so that they could not get near, they went around another way, got up to the roof of one of the neighboring houses, came over to the roof of the house where Jesus was, dug up the packed earth of which the roof was chiefly made, made an opening between the poles which had supported the packed



earth, and let the rug, man and all, down just behind Jesus. The eagerness with which they did it, and the determination to overcome all difficulties which they manifested, touched Jesus. He saw in it evidence of great faith—faith both of those who brought their friend and of the friend who permitted himself to be brought, and turning to the sick man he said, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee."

Why Jesus said this to this man has greatly puzzled scholars. There was in ancient Israel a belief that all sickness and misfortune were due to sin and were sent as a punishment for sin. The theory was so untrue, however, to all the facts of life, that the book of Job had been written, centuries before the time of Jesus, to combat it. Doubtless many Jews still believed it in spite of Job, but did Jesus share this belief? Of course it is possible that, as a man of the first century, he did, but it hardly seems probable, for this is the only instance in which he addressed a sick person in this way, and he once rebuked people for thinking that calamity was sent as a punishment for sins (see Luke 13:4). Possibly Jesus had known something of the man before and knew that his sickness had been caused by sin, or possibly it was because as he looked at the man he read, with that power of insight which led a later writer to say of him "he knew what was in man," the story of the man's sin in his face or in his thought.

Be this as it may, he said to the paralytic, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." Squatting with the crowd before the door and listening to him were some scribes—Pharisees who were experts in copying and interpreting the law. These men fully believed that God forgives sin, but they were shocked to hear a man say to a sinner, and of specific sins, "God has forgiven thee." They

murmured, "Blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins, and only God knows whether they are forgiven." Jesus turning to them said, "Why do you think thus? It is just as easy for a man to say 'Thy sins are forgiven,' as to say to a sick man, 'Arise and take up thy bed and walk,' but you shall see that the Son of Man has authority to pronounce sins forgiven." Then turning to the paralyzed man he said to him, "Arise, take up thy bed and go to thy house." Thereupon the man got up, took up the mattress or rug on which they had brought him, and walked off. Naturally the people were amazed, and praised God that such a wonderful man had come among them. They said, "We never saw anything like this before!"

It should be noted that Jesus here applied to himself the term "Son of Man." It has been already pointed out that most people who heard him would think that the term meant "human being," but it might also suggest to some the possibility that he was the Messiah.

After this Jesus went out of the city to the sea-shore, many followed him, and he taught them. As he was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee on the road from the Mediterranean to Damascus, which passed through Capernaum, he came to a toll-place, where sat a Jew, called sometimes Matthew and sometimes Levi, collecting export taxes. Such tax-collectors were called "publicans," from a Latin word which signified originally that one was a member of one of the great companies or firms which managed the collecting of the taxes. Matthew was called a publican, but in all probability he was not a member of such a company, but only an employee of it.

Publicans were very unpopular everywhere, and especially among the Jews. The companies which undertook

tax-collecting had to pay over to the government a certain sum and made their profits on what they could collect in excess of that sum. When the government was lax, people were sometimes compelled to pay the taxes as many as three times in one year. In Judæa the taxes were collected under the general oversight of the Roman governor, called the procurator; in Galilee, under that of the tetrarch, Herod Antipas. The system followed was that just described and was called tax-farming. A company took the job of collecting the taxes. The taxes collected on the road near Capernaum were taxes on exports, and, as these were what are called *ad valorem* duties, *i.e.*, taxes collected on the value of the goods, and there might always be a difference of opinion as to the valuation, the tax-collector there had an excellent opportunity to do many injustices. If, however, he were ever so fair in his valuations, he was sure to incur the ill will of many who wished to avoid the taxes altogether.

The Jews especially disliked tax-collectors. Palestine was subject to Rome, and Herod Antipas, although a Jew in name, collected taxes for the Roman government, whose creature he was. Accordingly a Jew who became a publican was regarded as in some sense a traitor to his people. He wrung from them their hard-earned money to pay it to hated foreigners. Jews who had a high regard for the respect of their brethren would not, therefore, become tax-collectors, and Jews who prided themselves on being religious and respectable classed publicans with sinners and immoral people. Probably the fact that they were so shunned kept all but the bolder and often the less piously minded Jews from this means of obtaining a living.

As Jesus passed by Matthew's custom-house, however, he stopped and invited Matthew to join him and become



one of his intimate Disciples. Whether Jesus had before known Matthew personally we do not know; perhaps he called him because of a sudden impulse as he read aright his character. Be this as it may, Matthew left his profitable business, no doubt at great financial sacrifice, and followed Jesus. His whole career afterward justified Jesus' faith in him. Publicans usually became very wealthy. Probably Matthew, who was doubtless only a subordinate official, had not amassed any great fortune, and yet, in comparison with Jesus or with Peter, Andrew, James, and John, he was probably rich. Having responded to Jesus' call, Matthew invited Jesus home to dinner. Doubtless he had not only heard of Jesus before, but had heard him preach. In all probability Matthew had been in the synagogue in Capernaum on the Sabbath some weeks before, when Jesus healed the insane man. He had since been thinking of God and the kingdom of God, and, when Jesus stopped and invited him, a despised publican, to join the inner circle of his intimate companions, he was quite ready to do so. More than this, he was glad of an opportunity to introduce to this wonderful friend, who was so good, who could say such beautiful things about God and life, and who could work such wonderful cures, some of his own friends. He accordingly took Jesus home with him and asked these friends to follow. Matthew's family supplied a meal and they all sat down to eat it, Jesus in the place of honor among them.

None of Matthew's friends were in good standing with the Jews. They were all called sinners. This does not necessarily mean that they were all immoral; it only means that they were careless about the niceties of observing the Jewish law. There may have been among them some immoral people, as the Pharisees believed, but



no doubt many of them were no more immoral than a modern man who plays golf on Sunday. He would be better off in church, but he should not be classed with thieves or drunkards. As it was Jesus' aim to bring everybody to his Father, he was glad of an opportunity to meet these people. He sat among them naturally; he ate and conversed with them; he treated them like human beings—like children whom God loved.

There is little privacy in the East. Either Matthew's door was open, or the company was so large that the feast had to be spread outside the house, for, as some Pharisees passed by, they spied Jesus in this company, and were horrified. Here was this teacher, who was turning the heads of the multitudes by his strange talk and wonderful cures, actually eating in the house of a publican with people who did not before a meal give their hands the ceremonial washing which the law required, who did not regularly attend the synagogue, and some of whom were, perhaps, Gentiles. So they stopped to inquire about it.

The Disciples, Peter, Andrew, James, and John, were apparently sitting on the outskirts of the company, who were, like all groups of Palestinian peasants, squatting about one or more dishes from which they were eating in common. The Pharisees asked these Disciples how it was that their master ate in such a company of publicans and sinners (the Jews called all Gentiles "sinners"). Jesus, hearing the question, did not wait for the Disciples to reply, but said to them in substance: "They that are well have no need of a doctor, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE FIRST PASSOVER SEASON OF JESUS' MINISTRY

(Mark 2:18-28; Matt. 9:14-17; 12:1-8; Luke 5:33-39; 6:1-5.)

**A**FTER telling of the events mentioned in the last chapter, the Gospel of Mark goes on to relate two incidents that were apparently connected with two spring festivals of the Jews, although the festivals themselves are not mentioned by the Evangelist. These are the discussion about fasting connected with the festival of Purim, and the plucking of ears of corn on the Sabbath connected with the feast of the Passover. These events occurred, if we are not mistaken in our dates, in March and April of the year 29 A.D.

The feast of Purim was celebrated on the 14th and 15th of Adar, a month which corresponded to parts of our February and March. It was in the time of Christ a festival that had not been observed by Palestinian Jews for more than a hundred or a hundred and fifty years. They began about 160 B.C. to celebrate "Nicanor's Day" on the 13th of Adar. It commemorated the day when Judas Maccabæus had in 161 B.C. conquered and slain the Syrian general Nicanor, who had threatened to destroy the Temple. It would seem that meantime the Jews in Babylonia had begun to celebrate a spring festival that they called Purim, the origin of which is obscure, but which the traditions of the Book of Esther (written about 100 B.C.) connect with a de-

liverance of the Jews from massacre by the heroic pleading of Queen Esther. In later Judaism the feast of Purim displaced the festival of Nicanor's Day. It is probable that in the time of Christ the two were observed together. More or less loosely connected with Purim was the "Fast of Esther," which in time came to be observed on the 13th of Adar. Probably in the time of Jesus it came later in the month and so nearer to the time of the Passover. However this may be, it was, we believe, this important and generally observed fast that gave rise to the discussion which Mark relates.

The conversation in question was this: some disciples of John the Baptist and some Pharisees were fasting and they noticed that the Disciples of Jesus ate as usual. The Pharisees accordingly asked Jesus why he and his Disciples did not also fast. Fasting is a very old and widespread religious custom; it forms a part of the religious discipline of many of the heathen religions. Its origin is hidden in the darkness that surrounds the beginnings of many things. Many theories have been proposed to explain it. By whatever theory fasting is explained, however, it has to do primarily with material things. While of spiritual value to some, it is, if carried to an extreme, of very doubtful value to the soul. Jesus had discarded it as an aid to spiritual discipline. He could not, however, hope to make the Pharisees understand this, and to attempt it might so arouse their hostility as to seriously interfere with his work. He therefore used a figurative expression that was a kind of parable. "Can the wedding guests fast," he said, "while the bridegroom is with them?" Weddings were always times of festivity, and it was a recognized rule of Jewish practice that brides, bridegrooms, and their friends who took part in the wedding were free from the obligation to fast. It



was therefore this freedom which Jesus claimed for himself and his Disciples. But in what sense did he call himself and the Disciples wedding guests? The answer to this we can only guess. The prophets Hosea and Ezekiel had spoken of God's covenant with Israel as a marriage-covenant. Perhaps Jesus meant to suggest that he had come to establish a new covenant, and so figuratively claimed for his work the privileges of a wedding. Whatever his meaning, it would seem to have been as obscure to the Pharisees as it is to us. If, however, they pursued the conversation further, it was not reported by Peter when he told Mark about it.

In speaking to the Pharisees about fasting Jesus pursued the subject further. He said, in substance, men do not patch old garments with new cloth. The new cloth would be so much more firm than the old that in the strain of being worn the new would tear the old and make the hole in it larger. Neither do men put new wine into old wine-skins. If they did, the fermentation of the wine would burst the old and worn wine-skin and the wine would be lost. They put new wine into new wine-skins. All through Palestine even to the present time they use bottles made of the skins of animals, and, of course, a new bottle is much stronger than one that has been rotted by holding liquid for a long time.

By these illustrations Jesus sought to teach that he would impart a new spirit to religion and that this new spirit demanded for its best expression new forms of devotion.

At the middle of the month Nisan (March-April) the Jewish Passover occurred. As the Law required all Jews to attend it, it is probable that Jesus and his five Disciples went to Jerusalem to celebrate it. Indeed, if, as seems probable, the disciples of John the Baptist were



still lingering by the Jordan and carrying on in some degree the work of their master, and if, as also seems probable, the fasting in commemoration of Esther was at this period observed toward the end of the month Adar, Jesus and his Disciples may have been journeying slowly toward Jerusalem when the discussion about fasting was started by the Pharisees. We assume that this was the case.

No details of the visit of Jesus to Jerusalem at the time of this Passover have been preserved. We only have the record of an event which happened on their journey from Jerusalem back to Galilee. On a Sabbath day they were passing through a field of ripened grain. We know the Passover had passed, for grain was not ripe till after that feast. There are few real roads in Palestine—only narrow paths. Land-owners plow and sow up to the very edges of these paths. When the grain grows tall and luxuriantly, as it does in the Jordan valley, the stalks lean over the pathway and sweep the feet of the traveler who rides through on horseback, and the knees of one who rides a donkey. Perhaps on this particular Sabbath Jesus and the Disciples were simply taking a short walk for exercise, since the Law prohibited traveling on the Sabbath. The Oral Law interpreted this to mean that one could go 2,000 cubits (about 1,000 yards) on either side of the city in which he lived. This permitted walks for exercise.

On this particular day Jesus and his Disciples were walking through a field of ripe grain, and his Disciples, being hungry, plucked some of the ears, rubbed them in their hands to separate the kernels from their covering, and ate them. The Pharisees were shocked by this, and asked Jesus why his Disciples were doing that which it

was not lawful to do on the Sabbath Day. What the Pharisees regarded as unlawful was not the fact that the Disciples took some ears of another man's grain. That the Law did not regard as stealing. It permitted a person in going through another's field or orchard to pluck what he wished to eat. The Oral Law, however, interpreted the plucking of ears of grain as reaping, and reaping was work. Rubbing the ears in their hands was threshing; and threshing was work. The fourth Commandment forbade the doing of work on the Sabbath. Thus an act that would have been innocent on a week day, they regarded as a sin.

It would seem that on this particular Sabbath Jesus and the Disciples had not sufficient food with them. They were poor peasants, they had been some time from home, and no one had offered them hospitality. The plucking of the grain was not, therefore, a matter of mere pleasure, but a matter of necessity. They were really hungry. Jesus therefore turning, asked the Pharisees if they had never read what David did when he was hungry, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God and ate the shewbread, which it is only lawful for priests to eat, and gave some of it, too, to them that were with him.

David was, of course, a great saint in the eyes of the Pharisees. So by citing his example Jesus put them to silence. Then he concluded the discussion by stating this great principle: "The sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath: so that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath." In these words Jesus set forth one of the great principles of his religion. He taught that religious institutions and rules are subordinate to human welfare. They are intended to minister to the well-being

of men, but if a time comes when they interfere with that well-being, they are to be disregarded. They are sacred only so long as they contribute to the welfare and improvement of the bodies and the souls of men. If a time comes when they starve the body or stunt the growth of the soul, they must be revised or given up.

## CHAPTER XXII

### JESUS AGAIN IN CAPERNAUM

(Mark 3: 1-12; Matt. 12: 9-21; Luke 6: 6-19.)

**B**Y the next Sabbath Jesus and his Disciples were back in Capernaum again, and went to the synagogue as usual. The Pharisees who had been scandalized the week before by the plucking of the ears of corn were there also. Their home was in Capernaum; they had been fellow-travelers with Jesus and his Disciples when the incident occurred.

In the synagogue that day there was a man with a withered hand, and the Pharisees watched Jesus to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day. They had not forgotten the words of Jesus spoken a week before. The great principle which Jesus had laid down seemed to them to destroy religion. In thinking thus they were no worse than many modern Christians. Men of every faith sometimes lose the substance both of religion and ethics in their eagerness to keep up time-honored rules and forms.

According to the rabbinic rules, not all healing was wrong on the Sabbath. One might give medicine or bind up wounds in order to save life, if the omission would probably result in death, but any specific attention to a chronic disease on the Sabbath was regarded as breaking the fourth Commandment. The principle may be regarded as too strict an interpretation of the Sabbath law, but it is a fairly sensible one on the whole. In ap-



plying it in detail, however, the rabbis fell into difficulties and they solved their difficulties in ways that sometimes seem amusing. For example, a person suffering with toothache might dip a morsel of food in vinegar and apply it to the teeth, but it was forbidden him to gargle his mouth with vinegar. Later, however, the rabbis ruled that he might gargle, if, when he had finished, he swallowed the vinegar!

It is easy to picture the scene in the synagogue. Jesus, having read and explained the lesson, was in a prominent position before the congregation. Perhaps the man with the withered hand was also in a conspicuous place, so that, as Jesus went out of the synagogue, he might attract his attention. Eagerly watching both were the dark faces of the Pharisees, as they waited to see whether the famous teacher would again and more publicly proclaim himself a heretic. Jesus understood their purpose, and asked the man to stand up before them. The services of the synagogue always had a degree of informality about them, so that no scandal was created by giving them this turn. Jesus then, addressing the Pharisees, said: "What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out?" The Oral law provided that in such cases food might be let down to the sheep but that it should not be lifted out till the Sabbath was over. Jesus knew, however, that when their property was endangered in this way, these Pharisees found ways of getting around the law. The Pharisees knew it too, and were silent. Jesus continued: "How much then is a man better than a sheep! Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day, or to do harm? To save life, or to kill?" Still the Pharisees were silent.

Jesus then, we are told, "looked about on them with

anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts," and turning to the man said, "Stretch forth thy hand." The man stretched it out and it was restored. It is said to have become as healthy as the other hand. This incident exasperated the Pharisees. There is nothing that makes even ordinarily good men so angry as to be publicly placed in the wrong, and so outwitted that they can make no defense. As a result of their anger the Pharisees went out and took counsel with some Herodians how they might destroy Jesus.

The Pharisees were people who were, according to their lights, devoutly religious. They cherished the Hebrew ideals. Probably they looked for a Jewish Messiah or king. The Herodians were people who looked for the restoration of the Herodian dynasty. Their aims were in general not in harmony with those of the Pharisees. The act of the Pharisees in approaching the Herodians is, therefore, a measure of their deep detestation of Jesus. The issue was thus clearly drawn between the religion of the Spirit, free to express itself at all times in deeds of necessity and mercy, taught by Jesus, and a religion that at times exalted rules above mercy and necessity and permitted the dead hand of the past to torture and destroy the tender life of the present.

After the services in the synagogue were over, Jesus and his Disciples went out by the side of the sea. Mark tells us that a great multitude followed him. It would seem that people from every direction had taken occasion, in their journeys along the great highway that passed through the town, to stop in Capernaum over that Sabbath, for the evangelist says that the people in that throng came from Judæa, Jerusalem; from Idumæa, and beyond Jordan; from Tyre and Sidon. They had all heard what wonderful things Jesus did, and they wished to see him.

Each hoped, no doubt, to see some marvelous work wrought by this wonderful man. As once before, he now asked for the use of a boat in which he could sit apart from the crowd. In this he sat and spoke to them. In the crowd there were as usual insane people who were cured by the power that emanated from his radiantly healthy and sympathetic personality.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### JESUS SELECTS THE TWELVE APOSTLES

(Mark 3: 13-19a; Matt. 10: 2-4; Luke 6: 12-16.)

**J**ESUS had now been preaching for some months. Galilee had been deeply stirred by his preaching and probably even more by his healing. Wherever he went people thronged about him to see him. From every quarter the sick—palsied, lunatics, lepers, and all the wrecks of humanity—were brought to him to be cured. Through this response the vast need of humanity stood revealed. His experience had, however, brought to light a fact of a different sort. He had aroused the opposition and hatred of the Pharisees. There is no hatred so bitter as hatred based on crude religious feelings; no opposition more deadly than the opposition of ecclesiastical foes. Already the Pharisees and Herodians were consulting as to how they might destroy Jesus. The Pharisees represented the most powerful forces in Judaism. Ultimately, if he did not yield (and yield he could not), they would accomplish their purpose.

Probably it was for this reason that Jesus determined to choose twelve men, train them by having them constantly with him, and then send them out to preach. Apparently he began to realize even then that his time might be short and that his enemies would violently interrupt his work. By training the Twelve to go out and preach he could in a measure multiply himself. They would



not be able to do all that he could do, but they could do something. They could awaken in men expectation of the early coming of God's kingdom; they could help to give them a right idea of the heavenly Father; they could in some degree carry on Jesus' work of healing. To accomplish this purpose Jesus went up into a mountain and summoned the persons whom he wished and they came to him. From these "he appointed twelve that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach." They were to "be with him" that he might train them. This being "with him" was their high school, or college, or seminary course. What a training it must have been to have Jesus for a teacher!

When the training was well advanced he wished to "send them forth." In Greek the word for "send forth" is from the same root as the word for "apostle." An apostle is "one who is sent"; he is a missionary, for "missionary," which comes from the Latin, also means "one sent." He was going to train these twelve Apostles to be the first missionaries.

Naturally several of the twelve were those who had already for weeks been with him. First among the number were Simon Peter and Andrew, the two brothers whose home in Capernaum had been, since that first memorable Sabbath in Capernaum, his home. They, as we have seen, were just plain fishermen. These two brothers were not alike; little as the Gospels tell us of them, it is enough to convince us that each had his own characteristics. Peter was quick and impulsive—quick to see and not slow to put into words what he thought he saw. He was not always right; he was easily mistaken. He was a man of strong feelings and was swayed by his emotions. He was capable of great and generous resolves and, when acting under the impulse of these, he was an inspiring companion

and a rare friend. He was capable also of great depression and discouragement and, when acting in one of these moods, was capable of being an arrant coward. Peter was, however, the leader of the twelve. His brother Andrew would seem to have been of a more quiet sort. He had not his brother's readiness to speak, nor, apparently, his brother's fluctuating moods. He had, however, unbounded confidence in Jesus, and all through the rest of his Master's life, when we hear of Andrew, he is looking up somebody to bring to Jesus. Next to Peter and Andrew the brothers James and John, Zebedee's sons, are named. They also had been constant companions of Jesus for weeks, and all through his ministry along with Peter they were his closest friends. They were warm-blooded, hot-tempered youths. Jesus sometimes called them "Sons of thunder" (or, as we might translate it, "Sons of lightning"). They were ardent in their love and devoted in their friendship, but fiercely intolerant of those who did not feel as they did. Once later, when some Samaritans were rude to Jesus, James and John wished to call down fire from heaven, as Elijah is said to have done, to destroy them.

These two pairs of brothers came from Capernaum. Then from the city of Bethsaida he chose two brothers, Philip and Bartholomew. Bartholomew's real name was Nathaniel. Bartholomew is Aramaic for "son of Solomon." People called him the son of Solomon so often that it almost supplanted his real name. The third pair of Disciples, then, were brothers, sons of a certain Solomon of Bethsaida. Philip, judging from the little that is told of him in the Gospels, was a man of practical affairs, but of a somewhat retiring disposition. Of Nathaniel Jesus said: "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

Mark and Luke mention together as the next three Disciples, Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphæus. There is some reason to think that these three may have been brothers. Matthew, as we have seen, is the same as Levi, the publican, the son of Alphæus. James was also son of Alphæus and some early texts also call him a publican. Unless Alphæus the father of James was a different person from Alphæus the father of Levi, James and Matthew were brothers. The fact that they had both been in the business of collecting taxes would seem to lend probability to the theory that they were brothers. The name Thomas means "Twin." In the Gospel of John he is called Didymus, which also means "Twin." Thomas was, then, somebody's twin brother. Of whom was he the twin? There has been much speculation as to this. The fact that he is mentioned between Matthew and James, who were both sons of Alphæus, would seem to indicate that he, too, was a son of Alphæus and a twin brother of Matthew. Of course we cannot be certain of this; the evidence is too slight. It is, however, an interesting possibility. According to the Gospel of John, Thomas was of a somewhat despondent, gloomy disposition. He always looked on the dark side of things and was unwilling to believe good news without the most convincing proof of its truth.

Next in the list of Apostles we find the names of Judas, whose surname was Thaddæus and Simon the Cananæan. Several Biblical scholars have suspected that Thaddæus and Simon were also brothers but of this we have no real proof. Simon belonged to the sect of Cananæans or Zealots. These were Jews who burned with an intense religious and patriotic zeal. They had banded themselves together in order to further by every means in their power



—by violence, if necessary—the freedom of their country and the establishment of the kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup>

The last name in the list of the twelve Apostles is that of Judas Iscariot, who was, apparently, in no way related by blood to any other one of the twelve. The name Iscariot means "Man of Kiryoth." Kiryoth was the name of two or three different places, so we cannot with certainty determine whence Judas came. One of these places was in southern Judah; many have accordingly supposed that Judas was the one Judæan among the twelve Apostles. Another Kiryoth was in Moab, so that it is possible that the parents of Judas had lived in that country. While both of these theories are possible, they both seem improbable. Others have thought that Kiryoth was to be identified with Korae in the Jordan valley, which was, apparently, about a day's journey north of Jericho. If Judas came from this place, it is easy to see how he became interested in the work of Jesus. First John the Baptist and then Jesus had preached in the Jordan valley, and Jesus had often passed up and down it. Judas seems to have possessed an aptitude for business and to have had business experience. He became the treasurer and business manager of the Twelve.

Such were the men whom Jesus chose as his first preachers and missionaries. They were not men of learning or eminence. They were simple fisher-folk and publicans. Each had his own peculiarities; but each possessed capabilities that in the opinion of Jesus fitted him for the task. They had moral insight; their warm hearts responded to divine impressions; they were capable of enthusiasm and consecration; they were ready to leave all and follow Jesus. They were by no means perfect, but they were perfectible. Toward that perfection Jesus

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VIII, p. 49.



undertook to lead them in the training school into which they now entered. Jesus was their teacher. The degree of their advancement depended on themselves. Some advanced wonderfully. Judas Iscariot, if we may judge by the sequel, like many a modern student, made a great failure, but a school in which only one fails is a noteworthy school!

## CHAPTER XXIV

### JESUS' FIRST LESSON TO A CLASS OF TWELVE

(Luke 6: 20-49.)

**B**EFORE Jesus selected the twelve Disciples he, followed by a group of people, had gone up a mountain. After choosing the Twelve, before they came down from the mountain, Jesus gave them some instruction. This is generally called "the Sermon on the Mount." It is thought by many to have come down to us in two forms. One of these, contained in Luke 6: 20-49, is comparatively short and simple. The other one forms chapters 5-7 of the Gospel of Matthew. We now know that the Evangelist who wrote our Gospel of Matthew grouped much of his material according to its nature, putting discourses together, then placing miracles together, then, parables. Some of this material the other Gospels place in different connections. It is natural to infer, therefore, as many scholars have done, that the Gospel of Luke gives us the real form of the Sermon on the Mount and that the form in which we have it in Matthew, while composed of genuine sayings of Christ, is an artificial product of the Evangelist, and does not represent a real discourse.

One's opinion of this matter depends upon his idea of the number of sources used by Matthew and Luke. If we suppose that the Apostle Matthew wrote a collection of the sayings of Jesus which has been woven into our present Gospel of Matthew, but was not used by Luke,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III, p. 21.

we discover, when we have separated from Matthew 5-7 the parts which, it would seem, were taken from the Sayings of the Lord which the Apostle Matthew collected, that we have a second discourse or "Sermon on the Mount" in addition to the one contained in Luke 6:20-49. The discourse in Luke was spoken to the Disciples (see Luke 6:20). The sermon originally recorded by the Apostle Matthew was perhaps addressed to a larger number of people. The Gospels do not give us all that Jesus said on either occasion, only such fragments as were remembered and written afterwards.

In the present state of our knowledge any conclusion to which we may come may be wrong, but we shall assume that Jesus uttered two discourses, and shall give a brief summary of each of them. Even if we are wrong in this assumption, we are sure that the teaching is all that of the Master, and it is better to study it all, even if we cannot be sure just when and where it was spoken, than to neglect any of it.

Let us try to put ourselves back in imagination into the circumstances under which Jesus was speaking. He had been sent to save the world—to conquer it by love. He had been preaching but a few months and already the opposition and hatred of the ecclesiastical authorities were such that he realized that he could not work long. He had chosen these men to go out and work for him—to continue his work in his stead. As he looked on them that day what a contrast they presented to the world they had to conquer! They were poor, simple, poorly educated fisher-folk and clerks of publicans; the world was rich, powerful, sinful, deeply entrenched in prejudices, and capable of awful hatred. He did not, however, despair. Knowing the power of love and goodness, he knew these Disciples could triumph, though they might have to

suffer untold hardships, and even martyrdom, to do it. It was considerations something like these which shaped his opening words. These words, as they may be translated, are :

Blessed are you, afflicted ones ;  
For the kingdom of God is yours.

Blessed are you that hunger now ;  
For you shall be filled.

Blessed are you who weep now ;  
For you shall laugh.

Blessed are you, when men shall hate you,  
And when they shall separate themselves from you,  
And reproach you and cast out your name as evil  
For the sake of the Son of man.

Rejoice in that day and dance for joy,  
For behold, your reward in heaven is great,  
For thus did their fathers unto the prophets.

But alas for you who are satisfied !  
For you have received your consolation.

Alas for you who are full now !  
For you shall be in hunger.

Alas for you who laugh now !  
For you shall mourn and weep.

Alas for you when all men speak well of you !  
For thus did their fathers to the false prophets.

Thus did Jesus present the contrast between those who feel themselves to be afflicted or in need, and those who are satisfied. Those who are satisfied are incapable of



improvement; they cannot be blessed. Only sorrow awaits them. Then Jesus went on to tell his disciples to love their enemies, to seek the welfare of those who hated them, to pray for those who abused them. If a man slapped them on one cheek, they were to offer him the other; if one tried to rob them of the outer garment, they were not to refuse the under garment also. They were to give to all beggars, not to get back what was forcibly taken from them. "As you wish men to do to you, do you also to them likewise," said Jesus. He then went on to ask them what credit it would be to them to love those that loved them, or to be kind to those who were kind to them. Even bad men do that. He declared that, if they loved their enemies and were kind to those who were unkind to them, then God would give them a great reward, for he is kind to the wicked and ungrateful. "Be compassionate," he said, "just as your Father is compassionate." (See Luke 6: 27-36.)

People have discussed often whether Jesus' words about turning the other cheek and not resisting robbers and always giving to beggars are to be taken literally. It has been urged that to do in common life just as Jesus says here that his disciples should do would place society at the mercy of thugs and would encourage robbery and shiftlessness. It is quite possible that Jesus spoke in strong Oriental metaphor. It is also to be borne in mind that he was teaching a small class, to prepare them to perform a special duty. That duty was to win the love of men by self-sacrifice and suffering. He was not teaching a class who would go out to govern provinces or states and who would become responsible for public order in them. There is no doubt but that he means every disciple through all time and under all circumstances to love his enemies, to be kind and forbearing under insult and

provocation, and to be compassionate as God is compassionate. But when we consider that he was training a few men for a very special duty at a particular moment in the world's history, we do him injustice, if we press the form in which he spoke into a law that would abolish the police force, encourage violence, and do away with the scientific administration of relief to the poor.

Jesus then continued, "Judge not, and you shall not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned." He dwelt on this thought for some time in his teaching. Luke devotes several verses to it. He was teaching them the principles of the recoil of judgments. People often speak harshly of others, thinking that they are making known what bad people those are of whom they speak, when all the while the speakers are only exhibiting their own ungenerous thoughts and unloving natures.

He meant the twelve members of this class to be leaders of men—guides who could conduct men to God. He went on, therefore, to tell them that they ought to know the road to God and to have clear eyes. A blind man, he said, cannot lead another blind man; they will both fall into the ditch. If you are going to be an eye-doctor and get a piece of chaff out of your brother's eye, you must be able to see well yourself. You must not have something in your own eye bigger than he has in his! (Luke 6: 39-42.)

Then Jesus changed the figure and spoke of his disciples as trees. Sound fruit grows on sound trees. If the tree is decaying, the fruit is likely to be imperfect. Modern farmers know how true this is. If the San José scale attacks their apple trees and makes them begin to rot, imperfect spots appear in the apples also. So Jesus tried to make these disciples understand that, if they were to be prepared to bear fruit in the kingdom of

God, they must themselves be good through and through.

He concluded this lecture to his class with two comparisons. He likened those who listened to his teaching and put it into practice, to a wise man who, in building a house, founded it upon a rock. When the rainy season came and the region was flooded, the house stood securely. Its foundations could not be washed away. On the other hand, he compared those who heard his teachings and went out and lived as though they had not heard them, to a foolish man who built his house on sand. When the rainy season came and the region was flooded, the sand washed from under the house, the wind blew it over, and it fell with a crash—a perfect wreck.

Such in substance was the first lecture of this matchless teacher to his class of twelve. The classroom was the open air; the teacher was the Christ. Fortunately some one in the class took notes and the words of the lecture are among the literary and religious treasures of the race.

## CHAPTER XXV

### ANOTHER LESSON TO A CLASS OF TWELVE

(Matt. 5-7.)

THE second discourse which we have supposed that Jesus may have delivered to the twelve Disciples is recorded for us in the parts of Matthew, chapters 5-7 which, according to one theory of the composition of the Gospels, was taken from the "Sayings of Jesus" written by the Apostle Matthew. From the present sources of our knowledge we cannot be sure that this is absolutely correct, but, as pointed out already, it affords a convenient form under which to study the teaching of Jesus.

This second discourse begins, like the other, with "Beatitudes" or sentences of blessing. Some of them are almost identical with those in the first discourse; they differ only by the addition of words which make their meaning clear. It has often been supposed that in Luke we have the form in which Jesus uttered these Beatitudes, and that the additions found in Matthew were made by the author of the Gospel in order to bring out what he thought their meaning must be. If, however, Jesus delivered two lessons or discourses to his Disciples (and what good teacher would not give at least that number?), it is not at all impossible that the changes in Matthew were made by Jesus himself. Every teacher knows that after a lecture or lesson pupils eager to learn ask questions. If the teacher has used strong figures of speech that can be taken in more than one sense, they are almost



sure to ask questions. The words of Jesus that we have translated "afflicted ones" and "satisfied," also mean "poor" and "rich." It seems most probable that, after Jesus had finished speaking, as the little company talked together, either at once or at their evening meal or during the evening, some of them asked him whether he really meant that all the poor were blessed and all the rich cursed. It would certainly be like a good teacher (and we therefore suppose it would be like Jesus) to correct in a second lesson for the benefit of all, a misunderstanding that had caused one or two to stumble. Such considerations would satisfactorily account for the differences in the form of the Beatitudes. We suppose, then, that the second discourse began with a restatement and enlargement of the Beatitudes, thus:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit:  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn:  
For they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the gentle:  
For they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness:  
For they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful:  
For they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart:  
For they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers:  
For they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness sake:

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5: 1-10.)

Having uttered these great sentences, the Master looked at his class as he had done before, and again the contrast between these obscure peasants and the task of winning the great, powerful, rich, hard-hearted, cruel world impressed him. If they were to do it, how genuine must be their righteousness, how conspicuous the light that shone from them! In contrast with the Pharisees who controlled the ecclesiastical organization of the land, how sincere must be their piety, how unsullied their purity, how full of love their hearts! It was apparently such thoughts as these that led him to say the things that follow.

He told them that they were the salt of the earth, but that salt must, in order to be good, have a genuine salt taste. If it lost that it became mere refuse. Then he told them that they were the light of the world; that men did not light one of their little clay lamps and put it under a grain-measure, but on a lamp-stand, that it might give light to all in the house. "Let your light so shine before men," he said, "that they may . . . glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5: 13-16).

He then went on to tell them that he had not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfill them. His words have often been understood to mean that he was going to help men to observe all the details of the Jewish law, but this is a mistake. What follows shows that he meant that he had come to make possible the realization of the ideals toward which the Jewish law pointed. Just as the flower fulfills the promise of the plant or the bud, so he came to fulfill the Law (Matt.

5:17-20). If they were to be the light of the world, they must possess a righteousness that was far superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees. In order to impress this on them, he took up five points of Jewish law as it was then interpreted, and pointed out in each case how superficial the Jewish applications were and how different real righteousness was.

The Jews were careful not to kill a man, but they felt free to call him all sorts of degrading names. Jesus told his disciples that the use of such names was offensive to God, and that one who would really worship God must not only harbor no grudges in his heart against anybody, but be sure that no one harbored a grudge against him (Matt. 5:21-24). He then went on to say that it was not enough not to commit adultery; an impure thought was sin (Matt. 5:27-30); that it was not enough to do the things one had sworn that he would do, but that a really good man has but one standard of truth and will do a thing in fulfilment of his simplest promise just as faithfully as though in an oath he had prayed God to punish him if he did not (Matt. 5:33-37); that running through the Jewish law was the principle of revenge—"an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"—but they were to indulge in no acts of revenge, but submit patiently to insults (Matt. 5:38-41); that the law justified one who loved his neighbor and hated his enemy, but they must love their enemies, and do good to those who hated them. Thus would they be like their Father God—they would bear a family resemblance to him (Matt. 5:43-48).

After speaking of these matters of law and carrying their application from the outward deed to the inner thoughts and feelings of the soul, he went on to speak of various other practices. Almsgiving was regarded by



the Jews as very meritorious, but many Jews would give alms only if the fact could be publicly known, so that men would praise them for it. They were like some in modern times who will give only if their names can appear on a list that is to have wide publicity in the newspapers. Jesus condemned this practice, bidding his disciples to perform their deeds of charity in secret (Matt. 6: 1-4). Then he spoke of prayer. Some prayed in public places for a long time, that others might see how pious they were. Jesus told his disciples to do their praying in secret (Matt. 6: 5, 6). Similarly some when they fasted made themselves look very miserable that men might know they were fasting and see how religious they were. Jesus said when men fasted they ought to look cheerful and happy, so that only God should know what they were doing (Matt. 6: 16-18).

The course which he was pointing out was indeed difficult! He accordingly added: "Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it" (Matt. 7: 13, 14).

Finally, in conclusion, he warned them against false prophets who outwardly appeared to be sheep, but within were wolves. As in the first discourse, he told them that prophets, like trees, were to be known and judged by their fruits. Rotten trees do not bear sound fruit. Not all who say, "Lord, Lord," enter God's kingdom, but those who do his will (Matt. 7: 15-23).

Such was the teaching that Jesus gave these fishermen. Probably he said much more than this, but this is **what** some of the class remembered and wrote down. There have been other great teachers. The Buddha in India



taught groups of disciples, who found his words more precious than anything they ever heard; they treasured them and added to them. Confucius in China taught throngs of pupils, who noted some of his greatest sayings, and wrote them down, so that they are treasured by the Chinese to the present day. Socrates in Greece was a great teacher; he inspired two disciples, Plato and Xenophon, so that they put his sayings and thoughts into immortal literature for the admiration of the world. For simple beauty, depth of ethical insight, and practical value in the creation of character, the words of Jesus surpass them all. What a privilege it was to be a member of this class of twelve! Jesus' teaching of the Twelve did not end with these two lessons. He kept them with him for some weeks. Doubtless he often talked with them, spoke to them, and further instructed them in the things of the inner life. He also took them about with him as he continued his work, that they might learn from observation and experiment. He used the methods not only of the classroom, but also of the laboratory, to fit them for their life-work.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### JESUS AND A ROMAN CENTURION

(Luke 7: 1-10; Matt. 8: 5-13.)

**F**ROM the mountain, wherever it was, on which Jesus had given the teaching noted in the last two chapters, he returned to Capernaum. There was stationed in Capernaum a Roman centurion—an army officer corresponding to a captain in a modern army. A slave of this centurion's, of whom he was very fond, was very ill and at the point of death. Like every one else in Capernaum, the centurion had heard of Jesus' fame as a healer. He therefore sent to the elders of the Jews and asked them to intercede with Jesus, to persuade him to save the life of this slave. The centurion, being a foreigner, thought that Jesus as a Jew would do it more readily for the elders of the synagogue than for him. The elders accordingly hastened to Jesus and presented the request as earnestly as they could. They said "he loves our nation and has built our synagogue."

The Roman centurions were, as a rule, a high class of men. They commanded often, as this one apparently did, detachments of soldiers. They were stationed here and there throughout the Roman empire, to keep order. On these men the security of the public depended. This centurion of Capernaum was probably in the service of Herod Antipas, and was helping to keep order under him. The statement, "he loves our nation," indicates that, having lived long among the Jews, he was attracted by

their religion. For a century or two the Jews had tried to win converts from the heathen, and had had a fair degree of success. Many intelligent people were unable longer to believe in the imaginary gods of the various nations and the Jewish doctrine of the One God, just and holy, appealed to them. Some of these had become real Jews and observed all the details of the Jewish Law, but there were others to whom many requirements of the Law seemed as unreasonable as the ceremonial of a heathen god. Such people, if drawn to the Jewish doctrine of God, contented themselves by worshiping Jehovah from afar and observing the moral precepts of the Law. They thus lived on the fringe of Judaism, and frequently were its generous benefactors.

This centurion would seem to have been a man of this sort. A monotheist probably, reverent and moral, he had constructed at Capernaum at his own expense a beautiful synagogue, the ruins of which modern excavations have disclosed. All these details help us to understand what an interesting man it was who was now appealing to Jesus. When the Jewish elders made their request of Jesus, he readily set out with them to go to the centurion's house. When the little party approached the house the centurion sent some of his friends to meet them and to say that he was not worthy that Jesus should come under his roof. This was probably done out of consideration for Jewish customs. The centurion knew that no Jew could enter the dwelling of a Gentile without becoming ceremonially unclean, and he wished to save Jesus the trouble of ceremonial purification. This was probably a part, at least, of his motive. Humility may also have prompted his act.

At all events his message to Jesus ran something like this: "Sir, do not trouble yourself; I am not worthy that

you should come under my roof. Neither did I think myself worthy to come to you, but give the word of command and my servant shall be healed. I, like you, am a man under authority. I have soldiers under me, and I say to one, Go, and he goes; to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it." Jesus was astonished at the centurion's conduct, and, turning to those about him, he said: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Then, turning to the centurion, he said: "Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." The Evangelists declare that the slave was cured in that very hour.



## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE WIDOW OF NAIN AND HER SON

(Luke 7: 11-17.)

**A**CCORDING to the same early source Jesus, soon after this, performed another wonderful act, which seemed to the people far more marvelous than anything he had yet done.

About four hours' walk to the southeast of Nazareth, on some rising ground in the great plain of Esdrælon, lay the little village of Nain. One day as Jesus was entering it, followed by his Disciples and a considerable crowd of people, they met a funeral procession coming out of the village. It was the funeral of a young man, the only son of a widow. Doubtless those who were following the bier were making great lamentations. The Orientals are far less restrained in the expression of grief or joy than we of the Western world; they give free rein to their feelings. They regard it as unnatural not to do so.

Indeed, they were not always content with the natural expressions of grief made by the relatives. They often hired men and women skillful in singing dirges, making loud exclamations of grief, and in various ways acting as though in sorrow (see Jer. 9: 17). Sometimes flute-players were employed to add to the doleful effect of the mourning by playing lugubrious tunes (see Matt. 9: 23). Only the well-to-do could, however, afford such luxuries. Probably the weeping in the humble procession which Jesus met at the gate of Nain was done by the mother and her friends.

The heart of Jesus, always sympathetic, was touched by the mother's sorrow. He said to her: "Do not weep!" He approached the bier, and the bearers stood still. He then said to the young man: "I say unto thee, arise," and he who was stretched on the bier sat up, and Jesus restored him to his mother.

When the people saw this, great fear took hold of them. Jesus had, they believed, raised the dead before their eyes. They could not but regard him as a most wonderful prophet. He had power over life and death. One might have supposed that they would have been filled with joy, but at first two motives prevented that. The sudden change seemed to them uncanny. It made them feel that they were in the power of one who could do anything; he might even read their thoughts—their covetous thoughts, their hateful thoughts, their impure thoughts. Then, too, in the presence of one who must be holy, if God enabled him to raise the dead, they feared because of their own sense of sinfulness. They felt like Peter on an earlier occasion, when, after Jesus had shown wonderful knowledge, he said: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8). The first feeling of shrinking and fear soon gave place to rejoicing. They could not but be glad that such a great prophet had been raised up. The fame of the deed spread far and wide and greatly enhanced the reputation of Jesus.

What is one, who lives in the modern world with its scientific knowledge, to think of this story? Many have, of course, rejected it as incredible and impossible. If, however, one looks at it in a common-sense way, regardless of any theory, either of theology or of science, there is nothing incredible about it. The people believed the young man to be dead, but they had no real medical knowledge, and he may have been in a state of coma. In

the East the bodies of the dead are usually buried within twenty-four hours of the time they expire, and, if in a state of unconsciousness one were mistakenly believed to have died, the people would not wait for certain unmistakable signs of death before proceeding with the funeral. The account was written by one who had only the knowledge of that time, and who, in common with all about him, believed the young man to have been dead. There is nothing in the story, however, inconsistent with the idea that a state of coma had been mistaken for death, and that Jesus, with his unique psychic or magnetic power had aroused him from that state. If this were so, the effect upon the minds of the Galilean peasantry, ignorant of the chemical changes that take place after death in the tissues of the body, and consequently ignorant of the greatness of the miracle which they believed had been wrought, would naturally believe that Jesus had raised the dead. One who devoutly believes in the Deity of Jesus must admit that all this is quite sufficient to satisfy the demands of the narrative and of the situation which it describes. We need not, therefore, read into the story difficulties for the people of to-day, which the account itself does not contain.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE MESSENGERS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

(Luke 7: 18-35; Matt. 11: 3-19.)

SOON after this John the Baptist sent some of his followers to ask Jesus: "Art thou he that cometh, or do we look for another?" This message was sent from the Machærus, a castle on the eastern side of the Dead Sea, where Herod Antipas had imprisoned John. Herod had divorced his wife in order to marry the divorced wife of his half-brother; John had dared to reprove him for it, even though Herod was the ruler of the land and almost as powerful as a king, so Herod had imprisoned him. It must have been hard for the prophet who had lived for years in the free open air, to be confined in prison. But such was the fame of Jesus and of the work he was doing that it penetrated even the distant dungeon where John was confined.

It had been John's mission to proclaim that the coming of the kingdom of God was near, and, as he heard rumors of what Jesus was doing, he wondered if Jesus might not be the Messiah who was to bring in the Kingdom. Accordingly he sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus. Perhaps John recalled conversations which he had had with his cousin years before, and remembered, as he had apparently done at the time of Jesus' baptism, the surprising depth of the insight of Jesus. At any rate now, in the confinement of his prison, where he had nothing to do but think of the great theme of that ministry which he



could no longer exercise, he desired to know whether Jesus, whose deeds were so wonderful, was really the Messiah.

The question which John through his disciples asked of Jesus was: "Art thou he that cometh or look we for another?" This question showed that John had begun to suspect what Jesus had up to that time kept in his own consciousness—that Jesus was the Messiah. The time had, however, not yet come for Jesus to disclose this fact to the world. His own Disciples, even those who stood nearest to him, did not yet suspect the truth. To have answered openly and positively in their hearing that he was the Messiah, while they were even less able than they were later to appreciate the difference between his conception of Messiahship and that entertained by the Jews, would have been to run the risk of thwarting the purpose of his ministry. Jesus, accordingly, gave an indirect, though not an altogether enigmatical answer. He proceeded before the eyes of John's disciples to heal many sick and infirm people, and then said to the messengers: "Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear . . . and the poor have good tidings preached unto them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me" (Matt. 11: 5, 6; Luke 7: 22, 23). The words of Jesus to these messengers would recall to one who knew the Old Testament well the prophecy in Isaiah 35: 5 and 61: 1 ff.—passages which probably John as well as Jesus had long regarded as relating to the coming of the Messiah and the kingdom of God. Apparently the Disciples of Jesus had not so applied them, for it was not until afterward that they began to realize that their Master was the hoped-for deliverer. We are not told whether

John understood the message. We are sure that many of John's disciples did not, for they refused to become disciples of Jesus. John may, however, have been wiser than his disciples. At all events the messengers of John did not come back to tell how he understood the message, so the Evangelists were unable to tell us any more about that.

After John's disciples had left for their return journey, Jesus made their coming the occasion of teaching some important truths. He said in substance: "When John was preaching, what was it that induced you to flock to the wilderness in such crowds? Was it to see a man delicately clad? No: you would go to a king's palace for that. You went to see a prophet. John was indeed a prophet, yes and much more than a prophet. He was the messenger who was to come before the Lord's Messiah. Of all men born no one has enjoyed greater religious privileges than John; nevertheless he that is least in the kingdom of God, when it shall come, will enjoy greater religious privileges than he."

Then, as Jesus thought of the preaching of John, he remembered how the great mass of common people had thronged the Jordan to be baptized, and how the Pharisees and scribes had stood aloof, regarding him as an unbalanced enthusiast, or, in the language of that day, as possessed of a devil. Jesus accordingly said:

"The men of this generation . . . are like unto children that sit in the marketplace and call one to another; who say, We piped unto you and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not weep. For John the Baptist is come eating no bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a demon. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a

winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" (Luke 7: 31-34).

The illustration is taken from a game, often played by children, and one in which, perhaps, Jesus had as a boy taken part. Some children became sulky and would not play. Others did their utmost to find a game that would so interest them as to make them forget their disagreeable mood. First they played wedding or a feast; then they played at a funeral; but the sulky children were equally obdurate toward both. "So," said Jesus, "are the Pharisees toward John and me. We are most unlike, but they find excuses for rejecting us both." "But," he added, "wisdom is justified of all her children." Thus did Jesus pointedly show how people whose hearts are wrong invariably find seemingly valid excuses for rejecting any teaching which interferes with their selfish way of life.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### JESUS AT THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

(John 5: 1-18.)

**P**ROBABLY the events treated in the last eight chapters occurred between Passover and Pentecost of the year 29 A.D. The law of Deuteronomy required Jews to attend the feast of Pentecost, and, Jesus, in all probability, was obedient to this law. We assume that the feast mentioned in the Gospel of John, (5: 1) was this feast of Pentecost. We cannot prove that such was the case, and are well aware that many other theories have been held concerning it. It is impossible to tell which of the theories is correct, and the view that it was Pentecost has as much probability as any other. Our only source of information as to what happened at this time is the Gospel of John, which is, as we have seen, by no means a contemporary source. Even though the source is not contemporary, there is no reason why its account of an event like this may not be historical.

Somewhere in Jerusalem there was a pool into which the water gushed intermittently. The location of this pool is uncertain, partly because there are different possibilities of interpretation presented by the text of John 5: 2, and partly because we cannot be sure what produced the intermittent flow of water. When water was flowing into the pool from some submerged opening, it of course caused a bubbling or some movement on the surface of the pool above the opening. In the popular language of the day, the water was "troubled," and it was believed



that this "troubling" was caused by an angel. Further, it was thought that this "troubling" gave to the water a healing quality, and the sick person who could first step into the pool after the troubling of the water would be cured of whatever disease he had. This belief had led to the building of five recesses or "porches" about the pool, in which sick persons might be placed to await that "troubling" which imparted to the water its healing quality. At the time of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, 1099-1187 A.D., this pool was believed to have been situated to the north of the Temple area. Over a pool which still exists there and around which there were five "porches" a church was built at that time.

While in Jerusalem at this feast Jesus visited this pool. He found the porches filled with sick people waiting for the "troubling" of the waters. The well-to-do were accompanied by friends or servants, who, when the long awaited moment came, could help them into the water. As but one person could, it was believed, be cured at each troubling, there was much rivalry for precedence. Those who had friends to help them were hurried down, while others perhaps more needy, weak from long illness and alone because of friendlessness or poverty, were out-distanced and lost their chance.

In one of the porches, the day Jesus visited the pool, lay a man who had been ill for more than thirty years. He was poor and friendless. At every troubling of the waters, another entered it before him. Whether his disease would now be called a nervous disease, we do not know, but probably it was. After asking the man whether he would like to be made well, and thus awakening his expectation, Jesus told him to take up the rug on which he was lying and walk away. This the man did, to his own great surprise and joy.

The day on which Jesus had cured the man happened to be the Sabbath, and immediately the Pharisees began to criticize Jesus for having broken the Sabbath by healing a man. Thus another controversy with the Jewish leaders over this question was begun. The account of this controversy is told by the fourth evangelist in the fifth chapter of John in his own way, and although some of the evangelist's own conceptions have evidently colored the narrative, there is no reason to doubt the fact that the Pharisees did resent the disregard of their rules for keeping the Sabbath, and vigorously expressed their feelings about it.

## CHAPTER XXX

### JESUS, A PHARISEE, AND A SINFUL WOMAN

(Luke 7: 36-8: 3.)

**I**F our arrangement of the order of events is correct (and any theory of the order must be partly guess-work), it was soon after Jesus' return to Galilee from the Feast of Pentecost, that he was invited by a Pharisee, named Simon, to go and dine with him. Jesus accepted the invitation. For some reason the Pharisee did not extend to Jesus the ordinary courtesies usually observed in Palestine at that time in welcoming guests. The roads in Palestine are mere paths, and, after the winter's rains cease in April, these paths become combinations of rock and dust. No one can walk over them without having the feet and ankles thickly covered with dust. In the time of Christ people in Palestine did not, like the Hittites of Asia Minor, wear shoes; they had only sandals, which protected the soles of the feet, but left the upper part of the foot exposed to dust. It was, accordingly, one of the rules of hospitality either to have a servant remove a guest's sandals and wash his feet, or to give the guest an opportunity to do it himself. In the East to-day, when shoes are worn, boys stand at the entrance of hotels and many private houses with large feather dusters with which they brush the dust from the shoes of those who come in.

When Jesus arrived at Simon's house, Simon omitted this expression of hospitality. Why he did it, we can

only imagine. Perhaps he regarded Jesus as a poor carpenter—a man on a lower social plane than himself, whom he supposed to be unaccustomed to the more refined ways of well-to-do people, and, therefore, one who would not miss this ordinary civility of a host. In the East, when people meet a very dear friend, they greet him with a kiss. That the Pharisee did not kiss Jesus, is not so remarkable, but this other sign of welcome he ought to have extended to him. Probably the Pharisee had been touched and to some degree thrilled by Jesus' teaching and interested in his work; he wished to know him better. At the same time he knew how his fellow-Pharisees regarded Jesus and was a little ashamed of what he was doing. He appears to have been well-to-do, if not rich, so he invited Christ to dine with him, in order that he might know him better, but treated him in this cool and informal way to "save his face" with his own co-religionists.

While Jesus was sitting at dinner in Simon's house, a woman that was in the city, a "sinner," when she knew that he was there, came in and stooped weeping over the Master's feet. Her tears fell on the dust which the Pharisee had given Jesus no opportunity to remove, and she wiped them away with her hair. Stooping, she kissed his feet and anointed them with ointment which she had brought. The woman is described as a "sinner," and many have inferred from the fact that the very next incident narrated by St. Luke includes the statement that Mary Magdalene, out of whom Jesus had cast seven devils, followed Jesus (see Luke 8:2), that it was Mary Magdalene who anointed Christ's feet. Tradition has graphically portrayed her as a sinful woman, whom the kindness and purity of Jesus had reclaimed, and who was thus expressing her gratitude.



All this may be true, but is not necessarily so. The Jews used the word "sinner" to describe Gentiles (see Gal. 2:15), so the term might mean no more than that the woman was a Gentile, although it may also mean that she was notoriously immoral. If she were really Mary Magdalene "out of whom seven devils had gone," she was a woman who had been insane—an unusually hard case of insanity—and had been healed by Jesus. As insanity was then regarded as produced by demons who were supposed to have taken possession of the person, she was, of course, regarded as a "sinner." There is reason to believe that St. Luke thought the woman's name was Mary; we incline to think, therefore, that she was Mary Magdalene, *i. e.*, Mary of Magdala. Magdala was a city on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee about an hour's walk from Capernaum. It lay just at the southern edge of the Plain of Gennesaret, to which Jesus sometimes went (see Matt. 14:34). At some time during his ministry the unfortunate Mary of Magdala had come into the presence of Jesus and had been healed by him. It is probable that it was she who was now expressing her gratitude to her benefactor in this unusual way.

Her conduct scandalized the Pharisee. If Mary were a Gentile, as is probable, she was ceremonially unclean to a Jew. And here was Jesus in Simon's own house permitting this woman to touch him! That made Jesus ceremonially unclean, too. If she were a Jewess, Simon still considered her insane. In either case, he concluded that Jesus could be no prophet or he would not permit himself to be defiled by her touch. One of the remarkable things about Jesus was that he could read what people about him were thinking. He now read the mind of Simon. So, turning to him, he told him a story, or

parable, of a certain money-lender who had loaned five hundred denarii to one man and fifty to another, and who, when neither one was able to pay him, forgave them both their debts. Jesus then asked Simon, "Which of them will love him most?" Simon answered, "I suppose he to whom he forgave most." Jesus replied: "Thou has rightly judged." Jesus, continuing, reminded Simon of the fact that Simon had greeted him with no kiss, and had given him no opportunity to wash his feet, nor had he refreshed him by anointing his head with oil. (Such use of oil was a very old custom in Palestine.) The woman had, however, in effect supplied all the deficiencies of Simon's welcome. She had, Jesus said, done what she did from genuine love, not from mere politeness. Then he added: "Her sins which are many are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

After this, turning to the woman, Jesus said, "Thy sins are forgiven." The utterance of this sentence on the part of Jesus scandalized the Jews present, just as it had done on an earlier occasion,<sup>1</sup> but before they could begin to criticize him for having uttered it, Jesus turned once more to the woman and said, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Thus did the love of Jesus reach and help the unfortunate, calling forth their grateful love, and prompting them to show it in a dramatic manner, and thus did his kind and tender words comfort and sustain them in the face of the misunderstanding and criticism of cold-hearted people who, though righteous and respectable, had never sounded either heights or depths in life enough to sympathize fully with a sinner or to understand the Saviour.

Soon after this Jesus started on another tour of preach-

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XX.

ing through the cities and villages of Galilee. We do not know the route he took, or the towns he visited. We do know, however, that a group of devoted women followed him to minister to his needs. Doubtless they knew what hardships such a tour, made by one who traveled entirely without supplies, imposed on the Master, and so they went in order to make him more comfortable. Three of the women of this group are named. They are Mary of Magdala (probably the woman who had anointed his feet), Joanna, the wife of Chuza, the steward of Herod Antipas, a certain Susanna, who was apparently well known when the earliest gospel documents were written, and many others. Mary Magdalene was apparently not poor, and Herod's steward would certainly be supplied with money. We may, therefore, be certain that the object of these women was to see that, as Jesus traveled about to help others, he should himself not lack ordinary comforts. They were prompted to do this by grateful love.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### JESUS MISUNDERSTOOD BY HIS BROTHERS

(Mark 3: 20-35; Matt. 12: 46-50; Luke 8: 19-21.)

**A**T some time on the journey through Galilee mentioned at the end of the last chapter, Jesus entered into a house for a little refreshment or rest and a multitude tried to follow him. We do not know whose house it was or in what city it was situated. Perhaps it was a house in one of the towns in the highlands of Galilee not far from Nazareth; the sequel would seem to make this probable.

There is nothing so inconsiderate as a multitude or a mob. In any crowd, whether in Palestine or elsewhere, there are always many people who are subject to chronic diseases. Doubtless there were many such in the throng that at this time tried to force its way into the house where Jesus was. They had heard that the great healer was there, and thought it their one opportunity to secure his healing touch. They forced their way into the house so continuously that Jesus and those about him had not leisure even to eat. The house was sufficiently near to Nazareth so that some of our Lord's family heard of it, and they went to "lay hold" on him and take him home with them, for they said "he is beside himself."

It must have been one of the tragedies of the ministry of Jesus that his brethren did not understand him, and that not even his mother could share his great thoughts and plans. It is always painful to be misunderstood by



those whom we love. For one who possessed the sensitive nature of Jesus, it must have been doubly distressing. It was not that they did not love him. On the contrary, probably it was just because they did love him, but could not understand the great mission in which he was engaged, that they wanted to stop his work. They could not bear to see him wear himself out on such a crowd, expending his energies for people who were nothing to them—people who might, perhaps, be worthless and ungrateful. It was a very natural feeling. We often misunderstand our relatives and friends in similar ways, especially if they are greater or better than we are. Every young person, who has felt himself or herself misunderstood, can imagine a little of what Jesus suffered from this attitude of his mother and brothers. Jesus, too, loved them with enduring affection. One of his sayings spoken toward the close of his ministry reveals what it cost him to sever the ties of family to take up his ministry to the world. The intensity of their feeling led them to try to stop his work forcibly and take him home. They said, "he is beside himself." The word which the Greek text attributes to them does not make them say that he was possessed of a demon. It is not quite as strong a word as that, though it borders upon the idea. It certainly does make them say that he was carried away by his eagerness and enthusiasm and was not manifesting good sense.

While Jesus was engaged in healing the sick who pressed about him, and the crowd prevented his relations from approaching closely to him, some scribes from Jerusalem stood watching him. Like the other people of Palestine, these scribes believed that the insane were possessed of demons. That Jesus cured them could not be denied, but, according to the philosophy of that time, a

miracle was no guarantee that a man was helped by God. He might be aided by a demon or by the Prince of demons. As these scribes watched Jesus, they said: "He casts out devils, it is true, but he does it with the aid of Beelzebub, the Prince of devils."

Jesus at once exposed the absurdity of their remarks by asking them how, if Satan casts out Satan, his kingdom can stand? No royal house, when divided against itself, can continue. Its enemies then easily overthrow it. So, he declared, if Satan were casting out Satan, his kingdom would crumble and fall. "No one," he continued, "can enter into the house of the strong man and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house" (Mark 3:27). This was an indirect way of saying that Satan and evil were being expelled from the lives of those whom Jesus was healing, because One mightier and more holy than Satan was binding him and casting him out. As the climax to this incident Jesus uttered some words which have often been misunderstood, but which are really very clear. He said in substance that all kinds of sin and blasphemy would be forgiven unto men except one, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit; that could never be forgiven. He said this because these scribes were saying that the work which he did out of his pure, unselfish love, and by the power of his consecrated, holy life—work which healed people and helped them to be good—was the work of Beelzebub, or Satan. Jesus was simply expressing in words an obvious moral and psychological truth. One who is so degenerate as for party or selfish reasons to call holiness demoniacal, or the work of God's Spirit, the work of Satan, has destroyed his moral sensibilities. None of the beneficent influences from God can soften him. Even God cannot helpfully forgive those who do not desire forgiveness,

and such a man has destroyed his better and higher nature.

When the conversation with the scribes had reached this point, some one near Jesus told him that his mother and his brethren were outside and wished to speak with him. Unable to reach him, that they might compel him to stop his work and go home with them, because of the crowd which surrounded him, they had managed to pass word in through the throng. Jesus doubtless knew their attitude toward him, and understood the purpose for which they had come. Their lack of understanding had been a secret sorrow, which he had borne in silence. Should he yield now to their affectionate, but stupid lack of understanding? Instead, he looked about on the eager faces of the throng and said: "Who is my mother and my brethren?" Then with another look, and probably with a gesture of his hand indicating those whose faces shone with faith and love and sympathy, he said: "Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

In these words Jesus expressed another great, but very simple truth. It is that kinship of spirit constitutes real and lasting relationship. The bonds of physical relationship are up to a certain point sacred, but they are surpassed by the bonds of spiritual kinship. It must have been an unspeakable privilege to live in the same house with Jesus for thirty or more years and to serve him and be served by him, but that was not itself enough to create appreciation and love for his purposes. Those who never had the privilege of living under the same roof with him, when in the flesh, but who share his perception of what the will of God is and his purpose to do that will, are his real kindred. Such stand nearer to him than those whom the accident of birth made members of

the little family at Nazareth. That, certainly, is an inspiring truth! Jesus spoke no word of criticism of his unsympathetic kinsfolk; he simply lifted by a few illuminating words the whole matter to a higher plane, where that which was good did not overshadow that which is best.



## CHAPTER XXXII

### JESUS' GREAT CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE

(Mark 4: 1-34; Matt. 13: 1-35; Luke 8: 4-18.)

**I**T was soon after this, according to the Gospel of Mark, that Jesus one day, when by the side of the Sea of Galilee, began to teach, and such a throng gathered about him that, in order to make them hear, he pushed out a little from the shore in a small boat, and addressed the throngs who were standing on the beach. His address consisted wholly of parables—the parables of the Sower, the Lamp, the Silent Growth, and the Mustard Seed. To these the Gospel of Matthew adds the parables of the Tares, the Leaven, the Hidden Treasure, and the Drag Net. Perhaps not all of these were uttered upon this particular occasion, but it is clear that the discourse delivered that day was made up of a succession of parables.

A parable is a story told for the purpose of illustrating a truth. The story has to do with natural outward events; the truth illustrated is usually of a moral or spiritual nature. A parable differs from a fable. In fables unnatural features are introduced, such as the talking of animals. The incidents of a parable are natural and such as men encounter in actual life. Parables have been employed in literature by many writers in different nations. We find them in the Buddhistic literature of ancient India; one, at least, is attributed to a Persian king; there are parables in the Old Testament, in the Jewish Talmud, and in the Koran, but none of these compare with the parables

of Jesus. There is in his parables a delicacy of touch, a completeness, a brevity, a virility, and a complete literary appropriateness, which make them unique. In his parables Jesus showed himself a skillful literary artist. He transfigured the parable. While he himself wrote nothing, through the parable he brought one form of literature to its perfection.

Sometimes Jesus founded his parable on an historical event, such as the going of Archelaus to Rome to get his kingdom (see Luke 19: 12-27); sometimes on the sayings of a well-known Jewish book, such as the sayings in Ecclesiasticus 5: 1-5 (see Luke 12: 16-21). More often he took the common incidents of farming and of everyday life. Thus the parables contained in Mark 4, which may not all have been uttered during the discourse of this day, are based on the familiar experience of a sower, the silent growth of grain, and the mystery of how so large a plant grows from the tiny mustard seed. Those which the Gospel of Matthew adds to these are based on equally familiar things—in many a wheat-field tares grow with the wheat. Every Palestinian child had watched the working of leaven (yeast) as its mother made bread for the family. To this day men come at times upon hidden treasure in Palestine—things of value forgotten or lost or concealed by people who have long been dead. Everybody who lived by the shore of the Sea of Galilee was familiar with the large nets, which were drawn through the water enmeshing every variety of fish, good and bad, at once.

With these familiar things Jesus sought to teach how the kingdom of God comes and what it is like. He and all who preach the word for him sow the seed broadcast. The roads in Palestine were mere foot-paths through the fields. They were only two or three feet wide and

farmers plowed up to their very edges. Thorny shrubs grow in abundance in the soil of that land and the small plows of antiquity were insufficient to uproot them. Everywhere ledges of rock come at frequent intervals to the surface. The hard roadbed, the stony places, the thorns, and the birds render much of the seed unfruitful, but that which does take root bears enough amply to repay the husbandman. Such is God's way in bringing in his kingdom among men. Then the grain grows silently and slowly. From day to day one sees no change, but all the while the work is going on. It is thus with the kingdom of God. It "cometh not with observation." The preacher's message seems very small; his words are simple; perhaps his thought does not seem profound; but if the great truths of God and man's true relation to him be but sown in good soil, consequences wonderfully great follow. This is the meaning of the mustard seed. In the tropical valley of the Jordan near the Sea of Galilee the writer has seen mustard plants which towered above his head as he rode through them on horse back. There the mustard plant becomes a "great tree," a fit symbol of the kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup> You cannot pull up the tares in a wheat-field without dislodging the roots of the wheat; while you are pulling in a great drag net you can not stop to throw out the inedible fishes without losing those that are good for food. Similarly, God does not separate the bad from the good while the kingdom of God is still in the making.

It seems that Jesus just told these stories to the multitude and did not attempt to make the moral very clear, so, when he was alone with the Disciples, they asked him about them. He answered, "Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter I, p. 4.



without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them." This answer of Jesus has greatly puzzled many. It has been made a ground for belief in a doctrine of predestination, *i.e.*, the doctrine that some people before their creation have been designed by God for woe, and others before their creation for salvation. In reality the words are a somewhat free quotation of Isa. 6: 10, which expresses the point of view of the early Hebrew prophets. These prophets thought of God as so completely ruling his world that he was responsible for the evil in it as well as for the good. On account of this belief, they could not distinguish between result and purpose. If things happened in a certain way, they could only think that it was because God designed that they should so happen. It is a matter of common observation that some people grasp truth, religious and scientific, much more quickly than others; they have quicker perceptions. Some people are much more willing than others to do right, when they understand the right. There is undoubtedly this difference of endowment, however we may explain it. It is also equally true that God has made us free to choose. He will finally judge us, as the parable of the Talents teaches, not on the ground of our endowment, but by the use we make of the endowment which we have.

The immediate meaning of the words of Jesus seems to be that he was in these parables trying to teach the people that the kingdom of God was not to be the kind of kingdom which they expected. It was not to be begun with a miraculous upheaval, or a series of battles, or with the cruel burning of Israel's enemies, but it was an affair of the heart—of the implanting in willing hearts of the



truth of God, its germination there, its growth, the consequent transformation of character, and the gradual creation by this means of a new life for the whole world. Some time the good would be separated from the evil, but that is a "far-off divine event."

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### TWO REMARKABLE INCIDENTS

(Mark 4: 35-5: 20; Matt. 8: 23-34; Luke 8: 22-39.)

**W**HEN the discourse from the boat, which consisted so largely of parables, was completed, it was nearly evening. Multitudes were thronging the shore and it was evident that, if Jesus went ashore on the west of the lake, he could not hope that the throng would grant him any leisure for that renewal of strength by prayer and communion with God which he found so necessary. He therefore said to his Disciples: "Let us go over to the other side of the sea." They accordingly started to row over to the eastern shore. Even then some boats followed him; people were so attracted by him that they refused to be left behind. As they rowed toward the eastern shore night fell upon them and Jesus, wearied with his labors of love, threw himself on a cushion in the stern of the boat, and fell into a deep sleep. While he was sleeping and the fishermen were slowly pulling the boat through the darkness, one of those violent winds, so frequent on the Sea of Galilee, arose. This little body of water is, on account of its situation, especially subject to such gales. They come suddenly, and often subside as suddenly. It will be remembered that the Sea of Galilee lies in a deep gorge. Its surface is 681 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea. High banks surround it. Those on the west are especially precipitous. Here and there deep

gorges, gradually sloping upward, lead from the level of the water to the high lands on either side. The air in the pocket over the lake naturally becomes heated and much lighter than the cool air on the surrounding hills. Atmospheric equilibrium is disturbed and cool streams of air rush with great force down the gorges, forcing the warm air over the lake upward, and violent gales are the result.

It was such a gale that caught the little boat that night and tossed it about like a toy. It must have been an unusually severe wind even for that sea, for the experienced fishermen, who had spent many nights of their lives on that very water and were accustomed to the vagaries of its atmosphere, were driven to their wits' end and were thoroughly frightened. In their terror they could not understand how Jesus could sleep through it all and awoke him to ask the somewhat ungracious question: "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Jesus then arose and said, "Peace! Be still!" One cannot help wondering whether the words were not addressed to the complaining Disciples, but the wind, as often happens there, subsided as quickly as it had risen, and believing the words addressed to the wind and the sea the Disciples thought that the blowing had ceased in obedience to their Master's command, and they accordingly believed him to be even more wonderful than before.

When morning came they went ashore on the east side of the lake at a little place called Kheresa. The place was so insignificant that, in the text of Mark's Gospel, it became confused with Geresa, a famous city of the Decapolis scores of miles to the southeast. Some later scribes when copying the gospel, knowing the distance of Geresa, corrected the text to Gadara. Gadara, though nearer to the Sea of Galilee than Geresa, is also several miles to the

south of the sea, so it is impossible that Jesus and his Disciples can have landed there. Modern research has brought to light the little hamlet of Kheresa, on the very shore of the lake. This is doubtless the point where they landed on the morning after the gale.

Not far away from Kheresa, a little to the southeast, was the city of Hippos, one of the cities of the Decapolis. The Decapolis was originally a league of ten cities, whose inhabitants were chiefly Greeks. All the population of these cities were Gentiles and Gentiles filled the outlying villages. These Gentiles made of the pig a domestic animal and fed herds of swine in their fields. As swine were unclean to Jews, this feature of the agriculture of the Decapolis distinguished the country from that of the Jews.

As Jesus and his followers landed from the boat and started toward the higher lands, they met a violent lunatic. In the language of that time he was "possessed of a legion of demons." The man was particularly violent. He had been often bound with fetters and chains and had invariably broken them and escaped. At this time he was roaming, scantily clad, from cavern to cavern and from tomb to tomb with which the walls of the valley leading up from the lake were honeycombed. When he saw any one approaching he cried and howled, so that the belief had spread that he was continually doing this. There is no doubt but that our Lord possessed in supreme measure what is in modern times called "psychic" power. With the almost uncanny intuition with which people with disordered minds sometimes discern the presence of such persons, the man ran to Jesus and fell down before him. Jesus, thereupon, commanded the demon to come out of him. The demon is said to have remonstrated and to have earnestly besought Jesus that he would not



send him away out of the country, and, finally, that he might be permitted to enter into a herd of swine which were feeding near by. This Jesus is said to have permitted, whereupon the whole herd became panic-stricken and ran over the edge of the precipitous shore of the lake and were drowned.

This miracle has, perhaps, been the subject of more critical discussion than almost any other miracle of Jesus. The discussions have turned about two points: whether demon-possession is ever real, and what is to be made of the uncanny story of the swine. As to the first of these points, it has already been discussed. It has been noted that the belief in demons has been practically universal among men, and that possession by demons was a natural way of accounting for insanity before man had any knowledge of mental diseases or of diseases of the brain. Some modern believers in psychical phenomena think that they have evidence that the spirits of wicked men actually sometimes take possession of those who have formerly been their victims. On the other hand, many educated people have ceased to believe in the existence of demons. Those who believe in the existence of demons or the survival of wicked spirits have no difficulty in explaining the part of the narrative concerning the swine. Others have supposed that the final contortions and cries of the madman, before he was restored to sanity, so frightened the herd of swine that they blindly rushed over the precipice, and that the Disciples accordingly inferred that the demons had entered into the swine. Whatever view a modern reader takes of the incident, three things stand out as certain: the cure of the man, the drowning of the swine, and the belief by all who witnessed the events that the two things were connected.

When the herd of swine rushed to their destruction,

those who kept them fled to the city in terror, and reported the matter to their employers. The owners came out to the place and were astonished to see the lunatic, who had been the terror of the region, sitting at the feet of Jesus, sane and properly dressed. Naturally they were afraid. They felt that Jesus had some uncanny power. He had destroyed their swine; he might cause them further loss. They besought him to depart from their country. Their financial interests were endangered by the presence of this Jew. True, he could heal the sick, but, unless one is ill one's self, property is valued more highly than the health of other people! So they asked Jesus to go away.

Jesus accordingly started to reëmbark for the western side of the sea, when the sufferer whose reason had been restored asked that he might go with him. He felt safe in the company of his Great Physician, and doubtless, too, his heart went out in love and gratitude to the attractive and winning personality of Jesus. Instead of granting his request, Jesus told him to go home to his friends and tell them what great things God had done for him. The man accordingly departed and began to tell his story—a story that went quickly from mouth to mouth. There were then no newspapers in Palestine, but rumor supplied their place. As if by a kind of “wireless” the story spread, and the fame of Jesus was established in that part of the Decapolis. Reëmbarking, Jesus and his Disciples went back to Capernaum.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### JAIRUS AND HIS DAUGHTER

(Mark 5: 21-43; Matt. 9: 18-26; Luke 8: 40-56.)

SO popular was Jesus with the people of that region as a healer, if not as a teacher, that, when he landed near Capernaum, some were on the lookout for him, and soon a crowd was collected about him. Just how he was occupied with the people of this throng—whether he was teaching or performing cures—the Gospels do not tell us. While he was busied with these people on the shore of the lake, Jairus, one of the rulers of a synagogue—probably the synagogue in Capernaum—sought out Jesus. When he caught sight of Jesus, he came with evident haste and, prostrating himself at Jesus' feet, said: "My little daughter is at the point of death. I pray thee that thou come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be made whole, and live!" If not the only daughter, she was much beloved by her father. The Greek of St. Mark might be happily rendered, "My little girlie is at the point of death!" Jairus chose words which revealed at once the intensity of his affection and his anxiety. Even to-day they permit a sympathetic reader to look deep into his heart. Jesus started immediately to go with Jairus to his house, and the multitude followed him. When they reached the city they filled the narrow, crooked streets. Others, seeing the throng, joined it, so that progress was slow.

In the throng there was a woman who had been looking for just such an opportunity. For twelve years she had



been suffering from an infirmity that at that period of the world defied the arts of such physicians as there were. She had spent all that she had in fees to these doctors, but, far from being made better, she rather grew worse. One does not wonder at this, when he knows something of ancient medicine. The Egyptians had some medical knowledge before 2500 B.C., and before 2000 B.C. the Babylonians made laws governing the practice of medicine and surgery. In India, too, the ancient Hindus possessed some medical knowledge, not to mention the medical wisdom of the ancient Greeks. The books of the Egyptians teach us that they knew something of the medicinal value of many herbs and something of surgery. It was thought, however, in all these countries that disease was caused by demons which had taken up their residence in the body, and the nauseating doses which the patient was compelled to take were accompanied by the recitation of incantations for the expulsion of the demons. We do not know what kind of physicians were to be found among the Jews at this time. Some centuries later we find a good deal of fairly sound medical knowledge reflected in the Talmud. Perhaps the Palestinian physicians of the time of Christ were as good as were to be found in other countries. Even if this were the case, however, the physicians were ignorant of anatomy, of many elementary facts of physiology, and, like all people down to the end of the nineteenth century, they were ignorant of germs. Their remedies were often of a nature to foster the germ of a disease rather than to kill it. What sort of treatment the physicians of Galilee had given this woman we can only imagine, but it is easy to understand the statement in the Gospel of Mark, that she "was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse."

The fame of Jesus as a healer had reached this woman.



It would seem that she did not live in Capernaum, or she must have heard of him sooner. Probably she lived in some distant town and had come down to Capernaum in the hope that she might meet with the wonderful healer and by him be given back her health. She had arrived at Capernaum only to find that Jesus was in the city only occasionally, and, while there, was beset by throngs. Now, as she saw him slowly making his way through the crowded street, she thought her opportunity had come. She said within herself, "If I touch but his garments, I shall be made whole." Pressing forward, she touched him and at once felt that a change had been wrought in her. She felt sure that her infirmity had gone. It is probable that her trouble was of a sort upon which the mental and nervous reactions of the body have a great influence. What is now known of cases of faith healing makes this cure credible even to those who once were sceptical about it.

The woman had sought to escape observation, but Jesus was so sensitive to the condition of those about him, that escape was impossible. He turned and said, "Who touched my garments?" His Disciples said, Peter acting as their spokesman, "Thou seest the multitudes thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?" Jesus, however, persisted in his inquiry, and, when the woman saw that she could not escape notice, she came and, prostrating herself at his feet, told him all the truth. Jesus said: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

At length, after threading their way slowly through the throng, they reached the house of Jairus, to find that his little daughter had become unconscious. She was believed to be dead, and the professional mourners, who were employed on such occasions adequately to voice the grief of a household, had already begun their tumultuous

wailing. Jesus went into the house and asked them why they were weeping and making such an outcry. "The child," he said, "is not dead, but sleepeth." They, however, "laughed him to scorn." Jesus then compelled the mourners and the neighbors to withdraw, and, taking with him the father and mother of the child and the Disciples who were with him, went into the room where the little form lay. Taking the child's hand, he said in the Aramaic of Galilee, the language she understood: "*Talitha qúmi*," "Little girlie, get up." The sympathetic reader can almost hear his gentle tone. In response to his command she opened her eyes and sat up. Jesus restored her to her parents and told them to give her something to eat. This command of his is a very human touch. He understood both physical and spiritual needs.

All who had come to the house and all who heard of it were amazed. They believed that Jesus had raised to life one who had died. From his own declaration that she was not dead and from what we know of states of coma which often appear like death, we can understand what really happened somewhat better than the people of ancient Galilee could. Wonderful as it is that one possessed of the extraordinary psychical power of Jesus should rouse, by his word and touch, a person from a state of suspended animation, it is not a violation of the laws of which we are beginning to have some knowledge. To us the wonder of the event lies in the unusual power and beneficence of one who could so employ laws of the spirit, but to the men of the first century it appeared in quite another light. They knew nothing of natural law. They had believed the child dead. They believed that Jesus had raised her to life. This, to them, was probably no more wonderful than it is to us that he should have aroused her from a state of coma.

Jesus foresaw that the notoriety which their belief would give him might cause him trouble. He accordingly earnestly urged those who were present not to tell others what had happened. The strain of silence, under such circumstances, was, however, too much for human nature. The fame of the deed spread far and wide.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE TWELVE SENT FORTH TO PREACH

(Matt. 9: 35-10: 15; Mark 6: 7-11.)

THE events reviewed in chapters XXVI-XXXIV are doubtless but a few of those which filled the four months between the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. They are, however, all that our Gospels have recorded of the busy days of these hot summer months. At some time during the summer Herod Antipas had put John the Baptist to death. The Gospels attribute this act of Herod to the request of Herodias, the wife whom Herod had unlawfully married;<sup>1</sup> Josephus declares that Herod did it for political reasons, because John was so popular with the people that Herod feared that John would lead a rebellion.<sup>2</sup> The two statements are not contradictory. The political motive may have been urging Herod to the deed, which he was a little afraid to perform, and it may have needed the request of Herodias to crystallize his resolution. But whatever the motive, he had beheaded John. The various events of this summer had greatly increased the reputation of Jesus. The fame of his wonderful works was upon all lips; it penetrated the palace of Herod. Herod, who was superstitious as well as tyrannical, but who, like many such men, possessed something compounded partly of conscience and partly of selfish fear, thought that

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXVIII.

<sup>2</sup> See Josephus, "Antiquities," Book 18, Chapter 5, 2.



Jesus was John come to life again. Whatever superstition Herod may have had, having embarked on the enterprise of ridding himself of a possible rival, he would not stop, even if he thought John had come to life again; so he began to seek opportunity and excuse to act against Jesus.

Later events abundantly proved, if proof were necessary, that Jesus was not afraid to die, but, for the success of his work, it was necessary that he live a little longer. His Disciples were not yet trained to carry his work forward, and they had not yet been admitted to his Messianic secret. They must be given an opportunity to gain experience in ministering to men, and must be brought to understand, in so far as they were capable, his Messianic claim and the way in which his idea of the Kingdom of God differed from the Jewish ideas of it. He accordingly determined at this time to send his Disciples out to preach and to withdraw from Galilee himself. He therefore called the Twelve to him, divided them into twos, and sent them out to preach, apparently arranging that one of the six pairs should remain with him. They were to preach, to have authority over demons, and to heal. They were to go simply clad and without provision for their journey. They were to be dependent upon the hospitality of those to whom they ministered. They were to greet courteously the people of any house which they approached; if they were courteously received they were to remain there while working near; if not courteously received, they were to shake off the dust from their feet and go to another house. It would be interesting to know in what direction each of the two pairs of Disciples went, but our sources do not give us information upon that subject. Now, while he sent the others away by different routes, James and John, the

sons of Zebedee, remained with him, and in their company he started for Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>1</sup>

On this journey Jesus adopted the unusual course of traveling straight through Samaria toward Jerusalem. Doubtless the reason for this was that Herod's suspicions were aroused, and that Herod had spies watching for him. The route usually followed by Jews down the Jordan valley would have taken Jesus through territory ruled by Herod, where that ruler might have arrested Jesus at any time. Samaria was occupied by the sect of Samaritans. They were an offshoot of the Jews. It has already been pointed out<sup>2</sup> that when, in the year 722 B.C., Sargon, king of Assyria, had sacked and destroyed the city of Samaria, he transported 27,290 of the inhabitants of the country to distant parts of his empire, and filled their places in the land with people from distant cities which within a few years he captured. These were brought from the cities of Cutha and Sepharvaim in Babylonia, from Hamath on the Orontes in Syria, and perhaps from other places. These strangers had not been in Palestine very long before they were attacked by lions, which at that time had not been altogether exterminated in Palestine. The new settlers supposed that they suffered these attacks because they had not paid proper respect to the God of the land. He, being angry at their negligence, had sent the lions, so they thought, to punish them. They accordingly sent a request to the king of Assyria that one of the priests of the God of the land be

<sup>1</sup> The remaining portions of Mark, chapters 6, 7, and 8 belong to a later part of Christ's ministry. The same is true of Luke 9:10-50. Possibly a part of Matt. 10:16 ff. was spoken at this time, but, as it now stands in the Gospel it contains words descriptive of conditions after the Resurrection of Jesus.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter I, p. 8.

sent to teach them how to worship him, in order that their lives and their herds might be safe. In compliance with this request a priest of the Hebrew God Yahweh (Jehovah) was sent them, and in due time they became his worshipers. They intermarried with the Hebrews already there and by the time of Nehemiah, three hundred years later, they were all one people.

When, under Nehemiah, the Jewish community at Jerusalem was reestablished and the Levitical law put into force, the Samaritans accepted this law, and desired to be received by the Jews of Jerusalem on equal terms with them. This recognition Nehemiah and his contemporaries refused. They regarded the Samaritans as aliens on account of the fact that they were partially descended from the people who had been brought into the land by Sargon. The friction between Jews and Samaritans was long continued, until finally the Samaritans built a rival temple of their own on Mount Gerizim at Shechem. In the time of Christ that temple was still standing and the whole hill country of Ephraim and the region called Samaria were filled with people who worshiped God in it. Naturally, there was acute friction between Jews and Samaritans. The Jews regarded the Samaritans as heretics tinged with a foreign descent and looked down upon them. The Samaritans considered themselves as orthodox as the Jews, of as noble an origin, and resented cordially the Jewish attitude. In the course of religious history it has often happened that a sect has a much stronger aversion to those who have separated from them, or from whom they have separated, than they have to men of quite a different religion. The hostility between Jews and Samaritans is one of the earliest instances of this. Samaria was joined to the procuratorship of Judæa, and was at this time governed



by Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator. In Samaria Jesus would not be molested by Herod Antipas.

Jesus, accompanied by James and John, entered, therefore, Samaritan territory as they walked toward Jerusalem. As night drew on the two Disciples went ahead of their Master into a village of the Samaritans to find lodging. It was evident that they were Jews and the fact that they were on their way to Jerusalem to worship in the Temple there rather than to Shechem to worship on Mount Gerizim could not be hidden. We do not know that any questions were asked; the Samaritans seem to have recognized the Jewish faces of James and John and inferred the rest. At all events they refused them lodging and apparently drove the Disciples away with insulting words. James and John came back to Jesus in a very angry frame of mind. They longed to take vengeance on these Samaritans. They had seen Jesus do so many wonderful things that they thought he could do anything, and, in their anger, they asked that Jesus would give them power to call down lightning from heaven to destroy the Samaritans. Jesus turning, rebuked them for this. According to some ancient manuscripts of the Gospels he said, "You do not know what kind of spirits you have." Jesus then led the way to another village, where, apparently they found a resting-place.





BOOK IV  
THE PERÆAN MINISTRY OF JESUS

Chapters XXXVI-XLII



## CHAPTER XXXVI

### JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

(John 7 and 3 and Luke 10:38-42.)

OUR knowledge of what happened in Jerusalem at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles is derived almost wholly from the Gospel of John. Although the Gospel of John was, as we have seen, written some seventy years after the events which it describes, and, although in its pages the actual historical outline is in some respects lost, the belief grows, the longer one studies the Gospel, that its author had access to a genuine tradition of the life of the Master.

As St. John tells the story of this feast, Jesus did not arrive in Jerusalem until after the feast had begun. The Pharisees as well as Herod had become thoroughly hostile to Jesus and were hoping at this time to do something to check his career. Before he came they speculated as to the probability of his coming. Would he dare to venture again within reach of their power? While they were talking about it, Jesus arrived and quietly went about his devotions and his work as he had done hitherto. Jesus, serenely indifferent to the enmity of the Pharisees, went up into the Temple courts and taught the people as he had opportunity. The crowds of common people, who had gathered for the feast and who daily thronged the Temple, heard him gladly. Some of the rabbis and doctors of the Law were impressed by the extent of his knowledge and the depth of his insight. "How," they



asked, "does this man know letters, having never learned?"

The growing popularity of Jesus and his disregard of some of the fine-spun rules of the Oral Law, led the chief priests and Pharisees to the conclusion that in the interest of the established order Jesus' career must be checked; they accordingly sent officers to arrest him and bring him into their presence. Among the men sent on this errand was a Jewish rabbi and member of the Sanhedrin (the chief Jewish council), whose name was Nicodemus. Nicodemus is a Greek name, so the man, or his father and mother, had probably lived at some time outside of Palestine. We learn from the Jewish historian and from the Talmud that it was a name borne by other Jews.

These officers of the Sanhedrin found Jesus teaching the people and listened to his words. At least one of them, Nicodemus, was so impressed that he was unwilling to arrest Jesus, and the rest of them, persuaded, perhaps, by Nicodemus, took the same point of view. They accordingly returned to their brethren without him. When asked why they had not brought Jesus, they replied "Never man so spake." By these few words they showed how deeply Jesus had impressed them. The questioners then asked: "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this multitude which knoweth not the law are cursed." In this way these Pharisees expressed their contempt. The common people they despised as ignorant. The common people did not study the Law; they were careless of its fine points; they were not quick to see the bearing of principles and practices not in harmony with it; they were swayed by feeling and enthusiasm. Nicodemus answered them: "Does our law judge any man before it hear him

and know what he doeth?" This was a sound principle of law to which they could make no satisfactory retort, so, like other people in similar situations, they became angry and began to heap upon Nicodemus personal abuse. "Art thou also of Galilee?" they said; "search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." Thus spoke Judæan pride.

It was probably during this festival period, perhaps on the very night after these events, that Nicodemus sought out Jesus by night for a further conversation with him. Nicodemus was a good, but somewhat timid man. He was greatly attracted to Jesus, but he had not the courage to brave the scorn of his associates. He had a position and a reputation to maintain; he was no longer young. The courage and daring of youth were not his. Nevertheless, he realized that Jesus was a man of God; he longed to be near him—to hear him speak further. He therefore sought out Jesus. The story is recorded in the third chapter of St. John's Gospel, and, if the Evangelist has not told us what was actually said on the occasion, he has given us some thoughts that bear the stamp of the mind of Jesus, and which might well have been uttered on such an occasion.

The central thought of this conversation with Nicodemus is: "Except a man be born from above,<sup>1</sup> he cannot see the kingdom of God." All good Jews were longing for the coming of the kingdom of God. The meaning of this word of Jesus is that only those see that kingdom whose souls are open to spiritual realities, whose spirits feel the movements of the tide of the Spirit of God. The current Jewish conceptions of the kingdom of God were largely physical—the coming of a physical Messiah, the winning of political freedom, the slaughter of earthly

<sup>1</sup> So the Greek ought really to be translated.

enemies, the establishment of an earthly empire. If such visible events occurred, anybody who happened to be living at the time could see them. Such a conception of the kingdom of God fastened men's thoughts to the earth; it made them feel that the chief end of life is material prosperity. This great word of Jesus to Nicodemus is in perfect accord with the rest of his teaching concerning the kingdom of God. Only those behold that kingdom who recognize that the real life of man is spiritual, not material, who by communion with God are lifted above the selfishly human toward the unselfish and divine point of view, who learn to love, to think more of duties than of rights, in whose hearts the Spirit of heaven finds a congenial home, and through whose lives it sheds light upon their fellow men. St. John does not tell us how the conversation ended. In accordance with his literary habit he introduces Nicodemus, tells us something of the conversation, then passes almost insensibly to the expression of reflections of his own, and allows Nicodemus to fade from our sight.

We are inclined to believe that it was also while Jesus was in the neighborhood of Jerusalem in attendance at this feast that Martha, whose home was at Bethany, within two miles of Jerusalem, just on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, invited Jesus to her house. She had a sister Mary, and a brother Lazarus. They were the children of a man named Simon, who just at this time was banished from his home on account of a skin disease which was believed to be leprosy, from which he got the name of "Simon the leper." Lazarus seems to have been married and living in a neighboring village. The house was accordingly at this time called the house of Martha. Both Martha and Mary regarded Jesus as a most wonderful person, and each proceeded to show her regard and



reverence for him in her own characteristic way. Mary regarded it such a privilege to have Jesus in their home and to be able to hear him talk, ask him questions, and hear his wonderful replies, that she just sat down before him and forgot everything else as she listened to his conversation. Martha's way of showing her devotion was quite different; she wished to give Jesus a supper that should do her credit as a housekeeper and should adequately honor her distinguished guest. As she went about the preparation of the supper, things did not go to her mind. There was much to do; she needed the help of her sister, and there sat Mary listening to Jesus, forgetful of all the ordinary duties of hospitality. Martha did not like to interrupt the flow of Jesus' words; she accordingly worked on alone for a long time, but, as the conversation continued and she found it impossible to carry out her plans alone, she finally lost all patience, and going to Jesus said: "Sir, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me." One cannot but have much sympathy with Martha. We have all, probably, been, like her, vexed with impractical people who under the influence of some great idea forget the ordinary necessities and amenities of life. But it would have been much better if Martha had spoken earlier, before she became thoroughly irritated. She might then have interrupted tactfully without being so rude to her guest, whom after all she deeply revered and dearly loved.

Jesus' reply to Martha is differently recorded in different manuscripts. As it is given in the ordinary translations of the Bible it is rather difficult to understand. Taking the most probable reading, we may reproduce it somewhat freely thus: "Martha, Martha, you are careful and troubled about an elaborate supper. Few dishes are



needful, or only one, and Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." By these words Jesus encouraged a simple life. He gently reproved elaborate living, which occasions fussing, worry, vexation, and so perturbs the spirit by its cares as to embitter the soul, shut out the blue sky of joy, and make one petulant to those one loves best. He also teaches that the real riches of life are spiritual riches. Of these one cannot be robbed; no thief can take them; no moth or rust corrupt them; one is not deprived of them even by death.

Probably most people in reading this story have more sympathy with Martha than with Mary, and in spirit recoil somewhat from the thought that Jesus seems to have commended the impractical Mary. It should be noted, however, that Jesus said only enough (or at least only enough is reported in the Gospel) to convey the great lesson of the incident. He merely commends the simple life and declares that spiritual possessions no robber can take. He does not imply that it is necessary to be as impractical as Mary was in order to possess these spiritual riches. That question is passed over. To have dwelt upon it would have seemed to justify Martha's fault of temper. As always in his teaching, Jesus was content to close the incident with a statement of eternal principles.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### JESUS SENDS OUT SEVENTY PREACHERS

(Luke 10: 1-16; 25-37.)

**T**HE Feast of Tabernacles was now ended. It was unwise for Jesus at the moment to return to Galilee because Herod was seeking his life. The attempt of the Pharisees to arrest him at Jerusalem had revealed the fact that for a different, though somewhat similar, reason the Pharisees would do all in their power to check his work and destroy him. It was equally unwise for him to continue permanently in Judæa. If the great truths which he came to teach—the fellowship of men with God which he had come to establish—were to find a lodgment in human thought and experience, it was necessary that his life in the flesh should continue a little longer, and that others should be trained to carry on his work.

At this time, therefore, he summoned seventy more disciples and sent them out two by two to preach. We do not know the names of any one of these. Some have supposed that the story of the sending out of the seventy is only another version of the sending out of the Twelve. There is, however, no good reason for that opinion. One who had done the work that Jesus had done, and especially one who possessed his attractive personality, must have gathered about him even in a few months far more than twelve devoted followers. Even if he had se-

lected only twelve to be continuously with him, it may well be that there were many others sufficiently devoted to him to make sacrifices for his cause, and sufficiently capable to be trusted by him with his work. We do not think we are mistaken, therefore, in picturing to ourselves Jesus as gathering about him at Bethany, or at some other point in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, this group of seventy and sending them out in various directions to preach as he had previously in Galilee sent out the Twelve. Naturally he gave to them the same directions that he had given to the Twelve. Their work was the same, the conditions attending it were the same, naturally it was to be done under the same instructions. The Seventy were sent two by two "into every place whither he himself was about to come." As he himself proceeded to go into the region east of the Jordan, called at that time *Peræa*, to preach, it follows that the mission of the Seventy was mainly devoted to *Peræa*. Possibly some of them were sent to parts of *Judæa*, but probably most of them went to *Peræa*.

The Gospel had been preached in Galilee by Jesus himself, and he had sent ten of the Twelve over it again. Such was the hatred of Jews by the Samaritans that it was impossible to preach it in Samaria. It would seem that James and John, who had accompanied Jesus through Samaria on the journey to the Feast of Tabernacles, were now left to preach in *Judæa* and did their work so well that they perhaps became known to the servants of Jewish authorities there. Possibly some of the Seventy also remained in *Judæa* to reinforce their efforts, but most of them went on into *Peræa*, toward which Jesus now set his face. In this *Peræan* ministry it seems probable that Jesus was joined at first by Peter and Andrew, who accompanied him and gave him companionship in his labors



and travels, as James and John had done on the journey through Samaria (see John 11: 16).

Probably it was at Bethany, before Jesus started for Peræa, or at Jericho, while he was on the way thither, that, as he was teaching, a certain lawyer stood up in the crowd and asked Jesus, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The word "lawyer" conveys to us quite a different meaning from that which it bore in ancient Judæa. The Jews had but one code of laws, in which religious and civil laws were all embodied. Civil law as well as religious was believed to have been laid down by God. Both kinds of law were included in religion. A lawyer was, therefore, an expert in religion, or was believed to be. He gave his life to the study and interpretation of God's revealed will. This man was, accordingly, one whom his brethren regarded as an expert in religious matters, and his answer to Jesus shows that he possessed great religious insight.

Jesus answered his question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" by asking another. "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" As an answer to this question the lawyer selected the most spiritual and ethical of the commands of the Pentateuch: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." The part of this reply about loving God is taken in substance from Deut. 6: 4-5, which to this day forms the Jewish creed. The part about loving one's neighbor is taken from Lev. 19: 18, 34. The two passages constitute the heart of religion and of ethics, and the linking of the two suggests the vital dependence of ethics upon religion. The man who could make such a reply deserves our admiration. Jesus apparently thought so, too, for he said: "Thou hast answered right; this do



and thou shalt live." It was at this point in the conversation that the kind of training that the lawyer had received in the rabbinical schools began to show itself. The rabbis, in order that people might know every detail of what they had to do in order to observe the Law, had defined what was "work" and what was not "work" on the Sabbath, what was meant under all possible circumstances by not reaping the "corners" of a field, etc. So this lawyer, in order that the whole matter might be quite clear, now asked: "Who is my neighbor?" The practical application of the splendid principles enunciated turned, he thought, upon the definition of this word, so, lawyer-like, he wanted a definition of it.

In reply to this question Jesus told a story, or in other words uttered a parable. It was the parable of the Good Samaritan. He said, in substance, a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. It was and is a lonely road, infested in all ages with bandits. He was attacked, beaten, robbed, and left by the roadside half dead. A priest came along, saw him, and passed by on the other side of the road with averted face. The priest may have had business which he thought more urgent than a deed of mercy, so he turned away to avoid distressing himself with the painful sight. A Levite came along and, for similar reasons, avoided coming near the man, and went on without helping him. Then a despised heretic, a Samaritan, came along, saw the man, pitied him, dressed his wounds as well as he could, got the man up, put him on his own donkey (the donkey was the automobile of ancient Palestine), took him to an inn and cared for him all night. Next morning, when the Samaritan left, he gave the host two denarii, the equivalent of two days' pay, told him to care for the unfortunate man, and, if he had to spend more for him than the Samaritan had left,

it would be repaid when next the Samaritan came that way.

Having told the story, Jesus asked, "Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?" The lawyer replied: "He that showed mercy on him." Jesus' final word was: "Go, and do thou likewise." Thus Jesus taught that a poor, despised heretic may by true humanity more completely meet God's requirements than the orthodox ministers of religion, if they are not humane.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### JESUS BEGINS HIS FIRST MINISTRY IN PERÆA

(Luke 11: 1-36.)

**W**E suppose that the parable of the Good Samaritan may have been uttered at Jericho, because it refers to the dangers from robbers which have always beset travelers on the road between that city and Jerusalem, and because Jesus in his parables often used as material, features which were close at hand. As the journey towards Peræa was continued Jesus, resting in a certain place, prayed, and as the Disciples beheld the effect of prayer upon him and realized how it refreshed him and renewed his strength, they made a request, which, perhaps, they had wished for a long time to make. They said: "Master, teach us to pray." They had been praying all their lives, but they now realized that they did not understand the secret of prayer. Their souls had never been refreshed by prayer as the soul of Jesus seemed to be refreshed. So they said to him in substance: "Teach us the secret of prayer. John gave his disciples a form of prayer; give us one also." In reply Jesus, as reported in the earliest notes on the subject which have come down to us,<sup>1</sup> said: "When ye pray say: 'O Father, may thy name be revered as holy. Let thy kingdom come. The bread for the immediate future give us day by day. For-

<sup>1</sup> See Luke 11: 2-4.

give us our sins, for we also forgive every one who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation.' " These notes contain the substance of what is commonly called "The Lord's Prayer," though as the prayer is reported in the Gospel of Matthew<sup>1</sup> the sentences have been made less abrupt and the literary form improved.

This prayer expresses the fundamental things in a religious life. One who uses its words from the heart realizes that God is a tender Father; he reverences the name of God; he worships the Person of God. He prays that God's rule may be established in the world; this is really a prayer that God's will may prevail in all things. The prayer for daily bread is a recognition that the supply for the needs of the body comes really from God. While the form of the prayer, if taken literally, permits a very little supply of food in advance, it presupposes that men will need to trust God to give them this supply continually. If they thus trust him, they will not be unduly anxious. The prayer brings all secular life into the realm of religion. Then comes the prayer for forgiveness, coupled with the statement that the worshipers have forgiven those who are indebted to them. This means the cleansing of the heart of grudges and of all hard and bitter thoughts. Then, lastly, there is the prayer not to be led into temptation.

This last petition has puzzled many. Temptation means "trial," "testing." In this world men cannot hope to escape it. Those who do escape and are never tested never attain really fine character. Those who court temptation, however, in a self-confident spirit are sure to fall, if they do not come to an unhappy end. It is only those who in self-distrust try to avoid temptation and who seek the help of God who can hope to meet it without

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 6: 9-13.



disaster. This last petition of the model prayer thus is intended to prepare one for victory over temptation, though it can seldom be literally answered.

Jesus not only taught his disciples this form of prayer, but he took the opportunity to teach them something of the necessity of persistent earnestness in prayer. People who merely repeat words do not pray. Real prayer is a genuine and sincere outreaching of the soul to God under the impelling power of a real sense of need. One who has such a feeling of need will not be easily discouraged. It was for the purpose of teaching this that Jesus now uttered the parable of the man who, aroused in the middle of the night by the arrival of an unexpected guest to whom he could not deny the rights of hospitality, found his larder empty and went to a neighbor to borrow some bread. The few rooms of the little house of the peasant-neighbor are strewn with mats, on which he and his family are sleeping. The neighbor at first refuses to put himself and his family to the inconvenience of getting up and looking for the bread which has been put away for the night, but he yields at last to the persistent entreaty of the man in need. Not only with this parable, but, apparently, by repeating some of the teaching which he had given on the mountain, Jesus impressed the lesson that real prayer is more than mere words.

Another incident of this ministry, which probably occurred after Jesus had gone on into Peræa, was the restoration of speech to a dumb man. The people here, as in Galilee, thought Jesus was able to do this because Satan helped him, and Jesus sought to convince them of the absurdity of this reasoning, as he had sought to convince the Galilæans.

At some point on this journey Jesus was asked to furnish some evidence of his divine commission—some won-

derful proof that he was sent from God. This request led him to declare "This is an evil generation: it seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah. For even as Jonah became a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation." The Book of Jonah tells us that the people of Nineveh repented when they heard the preaching of Jonah. Jesus was a preacher. The men of his time were not, in great numbers, repenting at his preaching. So, declared Jesus, at the Judgment Day, the men of Nineveh shall condemn the men of this generation, "for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold a greater than Jonah is here." The whole point of the illustration turns on the tender consciences of the Ninevites which led them to repentance, and the seared consciences of those of Jesus' contemporaries, on whose hearts the great words of Jesus made no impression.<sup>1</sup>

By another Old Testament example Jesus condemned the intelligence of the men of his time. The Queen of Sheba is said in the first Book of Kings to have traveled all the way from South Arabia to Jerusalem to see the wisdom of Solomon. She had a penetrating insight which enabled her to recognize kindred insight when she met it, but to the minds of Jesus' contemporaries his

<sup>1</sup> Probably many will recall that the Gospel of Matthew, 12:40, gives a different turn to the story of Jonah. According to Matthew the point of the reference is that "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." It is now pretty well agreed that Luke, who reports the reference to Jonah as we have explained it above, has correctly reported Jesus' words, and that the compiler of Matthew, writing under the spell of the growing feeling that nothing happened in the life of Jesus that was not predicted in the Old Testament, departed, either consciously or unconsciously, from the actual words of Jesus, in giving the quotation such a turn, that Jonah's reported sojourn in the whale is made a prophecy of the length of time Jesus' body was in the tomb.

penetrating understanding of the secret of life was shown in vain. Accordingly, Jesus declared that at the Judgment Day the Queen of Sheba would rise up and condemn the men of that generation.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### JESUS' FIRST MINISTRY IN PERÆA

(Luke 11:37-13:9.)

THE writer of the document which tells us of Jesus' ministry in Peræa mentions the names of no cities. We are accordingly unable to trace the movements of Jesus from place to place. How far to the east of the Jordan he went, whether he traveled southward to the east of the Dead Sea, or northward towards the Yarmuk,<sup>1</sup> we cannot tell. We are only given certain events and certain great sayings of Jesus, and these are not associated with definite localities.

One of the incidents of this ministry occurred in the house of a Pharisee, who had invited Jesus to dine with him (Luke 11:37 ff.). Jesus went to the meal without first going through the ceremonial cleansing of his hands, at which the Pharisee was greatly astonished. There is nothing in the Pentateuch about washing the hands before meals, but, in order to avoid touching food with hands which might possibly have come into contact with something ceremonially unclean, the Jews had developed many unwritten laws about washings. Later these were collected in the Talmudic tract called "Purifications," from which we learn that ceremonial washing before meals was regarded as a religious duty. In order to be perfectly sure of ceremonial purity, two washings before eating

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter I, p. 12.



were required, and one afterwards was customary. Some Pharisees also washed their hands between the courses. The washing was performed by holding the hands upright, pouring the water over them, and letting it run down to the wrists. This washing was not performed, as in modern times, for the sake of avoiding germs and disease, but because of the persistence of a once universal superstition that certain things possessed a mysterious power of bringing bad luck or exposing one to the divine displeasure.

When Jesus perceived the Pharisee's astonishment he took occasion to teach him a lesson. This lesson Jesus considered so important that in various ways he insisted upon it when teaching many groups of people. It was the lesson that real cleanness must exist in the heart or outward cleanness was of little value. In speaking to the Pharisee Jesus taught this by pointing out the absurdity of washing the outside of a cup or platter and leaving the inside, from which one eats, unwashed. He went on to say that the Pharisees were like hidden tombs, over which men might walk and never know that they were near such things at all.

A Jewish lawyer in the company then spoke up and said: "Rabbi, in saying this, thou reproachest us also." This led Jesus to say: "Woe to you lawyers also! for ye load men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers." This was Jesus' estimate of the men who were developing the oral law. He went on to drive home the statement by saying that, though they built tombs to the prophets whom their fathers had killed, they shared in the guilt of their fathers. His point was that, reverencing the past, trying to let the past entirely mould the life of the present, and rejecting the voice of God uttered to

their generation through such as John the Baptist and himself, they were real descendants of those who killed the prophets, and were as guilty as their fathers. Such conduct, Jesus went on to declare, brought upon the generation which he was addressing, the guilt for all similar conduct which had preceded.

On another occasion, when a great crowd had gathered somewhere out of doors, Jesus warned those who counted themselves his disciples to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Leaven, or yeast, was a favorite symbol with Jesus. Yeast spreads its influence until it has changed the character of a whole mass of dough, so, Jesus warned them, in the Pharisaical type of life, hypocrisy gradually pervades the whole life.

The incident at the dinner given by the Pharisee had again brought into striking contrast the chasm which separated the religion of Jesus from that of the Pharisees, and on this occasion Jesus denounced them with terrible power. The Pharisees, he knew, were bitterly opposed to him. His type of religion and theirs could not coexist. There must of necessity be discord between them. The Pharisees were in power; they would persecute his followers. He accordingly warned his disciples not to fear those who could at the worst only kill the body, but to live in the fear of God and to dare to be loyal to him. He reminded them that in the market the poor, who could afford little meat, could buy five sparrows for two farthings,<sup>1</sup> but, though these birds seemed so valueless, yet, declared Jesus "not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not: ye are of more value than many sparrows." With many such words as these did Jesus

<sup>1</sup> The coin mentioned in the original is the Roman *as*, worth about two-thirds of a cent.

endeavor to prepare his followers for the conflict which he now saw must come.

On this or another occasion, when Jesus was surrounded by a multitude, a young man approached him and said: "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." Jesus' treatment of this man is most interesting. Here was a question of "rights," of "social justice." It was almost identical with the many questions which agitate men's minds to-day. We are often told that it is the first task of religion to settle these questions. Perhaps it is, but, if we are to follow the example of Jesus, we shall not try to settle them by direct attack, but by seeking to remove from human nature the covetousness from which injustice springs. Jesus turned to the man and said reprovingly: "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Then turning to those about him he said: "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Here Jesus touched the nerve of social discontent; it is a mistaken notion of what the essence of life is—a wrong idea of what makes life valuable. A man's real life does not consist of things, but of goodness, purity, character. Covetousness, the desire for things, breeds bitterness; it makes one eat out his heart; it drives him to wear out his life. One may be as covetous over a small sum as a large, over a little thing as a great.

To reinforce the words he had just spoken, Jesus now told the story of the "Rich Fool," whose fields produced so much that he had to build bigger barns, who congratulated himself that he was relieved from care for many years, that he could now live a merry life, but who then died, and with a lean and poverty-stricken soul went into the presence of God. This parable was fol-



lowed by many other striking words, in which Jesus urged his followers to trust in God, and not to let anxiety over food and material things absorb their thought, but so to live as to lay up treasure in heaven. To reinforce this thought, he told the story of some slaves whose master was away, who did not know when he would come back, but who were faithful to their duties, lest he should come suddenly and find them negligent. "So," said Jesus, "be ye ready." Peter thereupon said, "Master, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?" Jesus did not directly reply, but went on to say, in substance, that any servant who was faithful would be rewarded, and any that was negligent would be punished.

The thought of the Heavenly Master and his earthly servants led Jesus again to portray the hardships which were sure to befall his disciples; he accordingly proceeded to describe these hardships in some detail, and to brace his followers to endure them. These hardships were sure to be misunderstood. The Jews counted such things as misfortunes, and misfortunes were, they thought, evidences of the disfavor of God. At that very time some, who were standing by, reminded Jesus of how wicked some Galilæans had been—so wicked that God had permitted Pilate to slay them while they were offering sacrifice at Jerusalem. Jesus replied that neither these Galilæans, nor eighteen men accidentally killed by a falling tower in Siloam, were more sinful than other men, but he added, that if they did not repent, they would similarly perish. To emphasize the lesson, he concluded by telling the story of a man, whose vineyard bore no fruit for three years, and who in consequence, ordered it to be cut down. With such incidents and teaching this first ministry in Peræa was filled.



## CHAPTER XL

### THE FEAST OF DEDICATION

(Luke 13: 10-35; John 10: 22 ff.)

**A**T some point in Peræa, probably in one of the towns in the Jordan valley, Jesus was, on a Sabbath day, teaching in a synagogue. In the congregation was a woman suffering from some infirmity which had bowed her together so that she was quite unable to stand erect. She had been for eighteen years a sufferer. Jesus, with his radiant, magnetic life healed her. At this time there were Pharisees in Palestine wherever there were synagogues. With their belief that it was a sin to treat chronic disease on the Sabbath we have already become familiar.<sup>1</sup> They believed that sickness of that sort could be relieved on any other day of the week and that the Sabbath should not be profaned by performing on it even a deed of mercy which could be done as well on another day. They accordingly said: "There are six days in which men ought to work: in them, therefore, come and be healed and not on the day of the sabbath." Jesus answered: "Ye hypocrites, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath?" With this reply his opponents were put to shame. They realized that their strict

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXII.

rules made them more considerate of animals than of human welfare. The people, on the other hand, rejoiced greatly at the wonderful things which Jesus had done.

It was at this time that Jesus, in trying to teach how silently and from what small beginnings the kingdom of God comes, repeated two parables, the Mustard Seed and the Yeast or Leaven. The mustard seed is a very small seed, but the mustard plant grows, in the hot Jordan valley, to a height of ten to fifteen feet.<sup>1</sup> So the kingdom of God, starting from a few people who determine to do God's will in the world, will grow till it embraces mankind. Yeast—a bit of yeast—buried in a mass of dough, works silently. In a few hours its influence has spread from particle to particle until the nature of the whole mass is changed. Jesus said that the kingdom of God would come in that way. Not by great upheavals and violent changes, but as silently as a magnet works upon a piece of steel, will the kingdom of God come.

Jesus now started back toward Jerusalem. As he was going along some Pharisees asked him whether, when God's kingdom comes, many will be saved. It was a point which deeply interested them. Two conflicting points of view struggled in their minds for the mastery. On the one hand as Jews they desired to believe that, on account of God's promise to Abraham, all Jews would be saved as a matter of course. On the other hand, they despised the common people of their own land because they were ignorant of the Law and did not spend their time, like the Pharisees, striving to keep the Law in all its details. Such people they regarded as accursed. Now Jesus had been likening the kingdom of God to a great tree. He had implied that many would be saved. As he journeyed, a man asked the question, "Are they few

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter I, p. 4.

that are saved?" Perhaps he put it in this way to see whether Jesus really differed from the Pharisees. Jesus did not directly reply. He said in substance that the gateway to salvation is a narrow gateway; many will seek to enter in and will not be able; strive to enter in while you have opportunity, for by and by the opportunity will have passed, and then there will be great sorrow on the part of those who through neglect have lost their chance.

As he was saying these things some one said to him: "Make haste and flee, for Herod will kill thee." Peræa, like Galilee, was under the rule of Herod Antipas. Jesus had, apparently, thought himself safe for a time from Herod's interference, since Peræa was at some distance from Herod's residence at Sepphoris in Galilee. By this time, however, news of Jesus' work in Peræa had spread to Galilee and Herod was on the lookout for him. The purpose of Herod had become known, and the Pharisees, anxious to rid themselves of Jesus' presence, endeavored to frighten him away by the fear of Herod. Herod the Great and all his descendants were unscrupulous politicians, cruel and ruthless, where their own interests were concerned. Antipas was, if possible, one of the least noble of the sons of Herod. In replying to the Pharisees Jesus employed the only term of disrespect to be found among all his recorded sayings. He called Herod a "fox." He said: "Go and say to that fox, Behold I cast out demons and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected." Then Jesus added as though to himself, "I must go on my way to-day and to-morrow and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

We must not understand the term "third day" to mean that Jesus thought that he had only three days more to



live. The Jews said: "yesterday and the third day" when they meant "formerly;" they may also have said "tomorrow and the third day," when they meant "in the future." The saying betrays Jesus' conviction that he must ultimately die—that the forces which were arraying themselves against him in hostility would finally accomplish his death, but that he would die in Jerusalem. Then as he thought of the city, the place where the Jews had for centuries believed that God had chosen to dwell, the city which had witnessed the preaching of so many and such noble prophets, the city which had in olden time rushed on to her doom in spite of all the prophets could do, the city which he himself loved, but which, turning a deaf ear to his words, was rushing on to another horrible fate, he exclaimed in pitying love: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings and ye would not!" Our sources of information tell us nothing more of Jesus' journey. We next find him in the Temple at Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication.

The Feast of Dedication is not mentioned in the Old Testament. It was a comparatively new festival, instituted in memory of a notable event in the Jewish struggle for liberty in the early part of the Maccabæan revolt from Syria, which began in the year 168 B.C. In that year Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, a vain man of erratic character, determined to blot out the Jewish religion and compel the Jews to worship Greek gods. As one step in the accomplishment of this purpose he commanded swine to be offered in sacrifice to Zeus on the great stone altar in the Temple courts at Jerusalem. This was done in December of the year 168 B.C. This effort of Antio-



thus caused the Jews to revolt under the Maccabæan leaders, and three years later, in December 165 B.C., Judas Maccabæus drove the Syrians from the Temple fortress at Jerusalem, a new altar was built, and the Temple was rededicated to Israel's God. The rejoicing was great, and the event was considered so important that it was commemorated every year in December by the festival which our Lord now attended. True, no mention of his presence at this feast is found outside the Gospel of John, but the correctness of the tradition recorded in John on this matter is made highly probable by the statements concerning a journey to Jerusalem recorded in Luke 13.

It was while at Jerusalem at this time that Jesus, St. John tells us, spoke, while walking in Solomon's Porch of the Temple, the parable of the Good Shepherd. Our knowledge of this parable comes only from the Gospel of John. It is a beautiful parable, but, as it stands, it is coupled with that Evangelist's belief that Jesus asserted to the Pharisees his Messiahship and argued about it in public with them,—a belief which we have seen in an earlier chapter<sup>1</sup> to be in contradiction to the other Gospels as well as to historical probability. As to the exact form in which Jesus originally spoke the parable, we cannot, therefore, be certain. When the feast was over, Jesus went back beyond the Jordan and resumed his ministry in Peræa.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chapter II.

<sup>2</sup> See John 10:40.

## CHAPTER XLI

### JESUS' SECOND MINISTRY IN PERÆA

(Luke 14: 1-17: 10.)

**W**HEN the Feast of Dedication was completed, Jesus returned again to Peræa. We do not know to what part of that country he went, but probably it was a different part from that in which he had been before the feast. Peter and Andrew now went on some mission of ministry by themselves, and Jesus appears to have been joined by Matthew and Thomas (see John 11: 16). The account of this second Peræan ministry not only tells us nothing as to the localities which Jesus visited, but contains very few statements of events. The narrative is filled with what Jesus said rather than with accounts of what he did.

We are told that Jesus was invited by a Pharisee to a meal on the Sabbath Day, and that there was a man in the company who had dropsy. Jesus healed him and thus provoked another discussion with the Pharisees about the propriety of healing chronic cases of sickness on the Sabbath Day. Such incidents happened in all parts of the country where Jesus went. Perhaps it was while he was a guest in this same house that he noted how certain of those invited were careful to seat themselves in the places which were regarded as the most honorable. Jesus accordingly gave them some very sound teaching as to the wisdom and importance of humility (Luke 14: 7-14).

When Jesus had finished speaking about this, one of the company said: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." It was at that time a Jewish belief that the kingdom of God would be inaugurated with a great feast, and this guest turned the thoughts of the company from the present banquet to that of the Messianic age. This led Jesus to tell the parable of the man who made a great supper and invited a large number of people. When the hour for the feast came, he sent his servant to inform the expected guests that the feast was ready, whereupon they all began to excuse themselves. One had this business to attend to, another that, another was occupied with domestic affairs. When the servant reported this, the host sent out into the street and summoned the poor, the lame, the blind—any one who would come—and with these guests celebrated his feast. In this way Jesus warned his hearers that, if the Jews, who had been bidden before all others to the feast of the kingdom of God, should fail to accept the invitation, the privileges of that kingdom would be thrown open to the Gentiles.

Once, as he was going from place to place, followed by a multitude, Jesus spoke of the sacrifices involved in following him, warning those who followed of the strong resolution and steadiness of purpose required of those who would be his disciples. He said, in substance: "If any man comes after me and does not love his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and even his own life less than me, he cannot be my disciple." This was Jesus' strong way of saying that a follower of his should love him and the will of God more than his earthly kindred. As one reads this saying in Jesus' own words, he is impressed by the strong and almost vehement language in which it is expressed.

It does not seem too much to suppose that his own struggle in leaving a mother and brothers and sisters whom he loved as only he could love, and the memory of what it had cost him to incur their disapprobation and cut himself off from them, gave a certain intensity of feeling to his words on this occasion.

He also drove home this lesson by some parables which show how those who are successful in any undertaking count the cost before they begin it. Lest, however, his followers should be discouraged by thinking too much about the hardships which may come from serving God, Jesus spoke three parables to show how God seeks men, saves men, gives men happiness, and rejoices with them and over them. These are the parable of the woman who could not rest till she had found her lost coin, the shepherd who risked his life to find a lost sheep, and the father who waited, watched, and longed for the return of a wayward and wandering boy, till the boy came back (Luke 15). With great joy the father greeted him, forgave him, re-clothed him, and feasted with him. At some time during this ministry in Peræa Jesus spoke the parable of the unjust steward—a steward, who, when he knew he was to be discharged, employed his master's property to place people under obligation to him, so that they would take care of him, when he had been discharged and could no longer earn a living. The point of the parable is that men take care to provide for the part of their future which is to be passed in this world, but are careless about making similar provision for the life beyond.

At another time Jesus uttered the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-31). The story presents two contrasts. The first is that between a delicately clad and well-fed rich man and an unfortunate



and afflicted beggar who lies at his gate. The second is that between these two people in the life to come. There the beggar is in bliss; the rich man in torment. The details of the story cannot be regarded as a literal picture of the future life. The purpose of it is to teach men that earthly possessions and material enjoyment do not constitute real and lasting life, and that permanent happiness may be the possession of those whom men consider unfortunate here.

At another time Jesus tried to teach his disciples to be kind to all and to do harm to no one. He pointed out that, in the complex conditions of life on the earth, it is impossible that things will not happen which will cause men to stumble. "But," said Jesus: "woe to that man through whom the occasion (of stumbling) cometh!" He added: "Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." Thereupon one of the disciples asked how many times he must forgive his brother, if he sinned against him—as many as seven? Jesus answered: "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but until seventy times seven."

One of the Apostles then said: "Lord, increase our faith!" Jesus' reply may be translated: "If you had faith of the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this black mulberry tree, be thou up-rooted and be thou planted in the sea and it would obey you." This was a striking way of saying, if you had faith, you could do things which seem impossible. In Syria and Palestine men have been accustomed to speak in such paradoxical and exaggerated figures of speech for at least three thousand five hundred years. Such sayings were never meant to be taken literally, and in those lands are not misunderstood as they have sometimes been in these Western lands.

Our knowledge of this Peræan ministry concludes with

a parable which was intended to warn disciples of Jesus against self-conceit. Masters do not thank their slaves, said Jesus in substance, for doing their duty. So, he continued, "When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which it was our duty to do."

## CHAPTER XLII

### THE SEVENTY RETURN AND REPORT TO JESUS

(Luke 10: 17-24; Matt. 11: 25-30.)

**A**T some time before the Peræan ministry ended, the Seventy returned and made a report to Jesus of the success of their work. The Gospel of Luke, in order to tell the whole story of their ministry within the compass of a few verses, gives the account of their return immediately after the story of their commission. There can, however, be no doubt but that their ministry occupied a considerable time, and, as the whole period covered by Christ's Peræan ministry was probably not more than three months, we cannot be far wrong in supposing that the return of the Seventy to him occurred just before he left Peræa for the last time.

The mission of the Seventy had been successful. They returned in high spirits. They said: "Even the demons are subject unto us in thy name." They had exercised in his name that magnetic, psychic power which enabled them to cure hysteria and nervous troubles; people had in consequence flocked to them for aid, and had given heed to their teaching. Naturally, the disciples were elated. Jesus was also pleased. Working under his direction and in his name, these men had risen into a new world of endeavor and efficiency. This was the first fruit of his labor through others. It was an example of what might be accomplished by his disciples after he had gone. Jesus took it as a sign of the final triumph of right and the

overthrow of wrong. He exclaimed: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." For the moment the age-long struggle with wrong seemed to his mental vision to be summed up in a dramatic ejection of Satan from the realm of God. Then, turning to the Seventy, Jesus told them in the figurative language of the day that he had given them authority to do his work and that, as they went about it, nothing should do them real harm. His actual words were: "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you." Lest, however, the disciples should become conceited and self-opinionated because of their success, Jesus said to them: "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

The report of the Seventy and the evidence which it gave that the work of revealing God to men, which Jesus had begun, would go on after he had passed away, was the occasion of one of the few intense psychological experiences which we can trace in the life of Jesus. As at his baptism the consciousness of his Messianic mission dawned upon his mind, so now there opened to his consciousness a clearer view than he had before had of the function of his person in making men understand what God is like and in drawing men to God. The early document quoted by St. Luke reports this experience and the words which Jesus was heard to utter. It says: "In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father; for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight."

After thus expressing to God his gratitude that he was



reaching the common people, of whom mankind is most largely composed, he continued as though speaking to himself: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father; and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." Just as at his baptism Jesus had found in his own nature that which justified him in believing that he was the Messiah and had the Messianic work to do, so now, measuring himself against the great task of bringing God to men and men to God, he found that in his own nature which justified him in calling himself God's Son in a unique sense. We cannot now penetrate his mind enough to understand all the depth of his thought, but we can understand enough to feel sure that he regarded himself as holding a relation to God that other men did not. This relation imposed on him the joyful duty of bringing others to God. It was Jesus' consciousness of what he was which helps to prove correct that opinion which his disciples at a later time held of him, and which has given the name of Jesus a place beside the name of God himself in the Christian world.

With the words of Jesus which we have been considering, the Gospel of Matthew couples another great saying of his. Some have doubted whether it belongs here, but it is the belief of the present writer that it does.<sup>1</sup> This saying shows that the thought of Jesus did not long dwell upon himself. He was too unselfish to let it do that. His mind at once turned back to the world and the world's great need, which it was his great task to meet. As he thought of the unspeakable anguish of the burdened

<sup>1</sup> The writer has given the reasons which have led him to this belief in a book entitled, "At One with the Invisible," edited by E. Hershey Sneath, New York, the Macmillan Company, 1921, pp. 73-77.

world, his heart went out to it in great tenderness. He longed to relieve its need. So, turning to those who stood by, he said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." It is hard to imagine any one, who appreciates, even in a small measure, the weariness, restlessness, and agony of the world, and their almost infinite depth, facing this seething mass and saying, "Come, all of you to me and I will give you rest!" He who could utter such words, must, one feels, either be a madman or the possessor of some heavenly secret, which he has learned in a unique association with God. Millions have, by experience, proved that Jesus was no madman. They have accepted his invitation and found the rest that he promised. With all their hearts they believe him to be what he was conscious that he was, the Son of God.



BOOK V  
JESUS AVOIDING HIS ENEMIES

Chapters XLIII-L





## CHAPTER XLIII

### THE ILLNESS OF LAZARUS AT BETHANY

(John 11; Luke 17: 11-18: 14.)

WE have already had occasion to note <sup>1</sup> the friendship for Jesus of two sisters who lived in Bethany, near Jerusalem. These sisters were peculiarly situated. Their father was a leper <sup>2</sup> and so, if living, was banished from his family; their mother was, apparently, dead. They had a younger brother, of whom they were very fond. The boy's name was Lazarus. While Jesus was occupied with his second Peræan ministry, Lazarus fell desperately ill.<sup>3</sup> In their extremity the sisters naturally thought of Jesus, their friend. He had healed many; they hoped that he could heal their brother. They accordingly sent a messenger to tell Jesus. The

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXXVI.

<sup>2</sup> Mark 14: 3; Matt. 26: 6. Perhaps, as has been conjectured, "leper" was a mistake for "jar-maker."

<sup>3</sup> The writer is well aware that many modern scholars regard the whole story of Lazarus as unhistorical, since it occurs only in the Gospel of John, and is, they think, introduced into it for doctrinal purposes. He is, however, convinced that there is in the Gospel of John a genuine thread of historic tradition. There is no more reason for regarding the story of Lazarus as without historic foundation than the story of the daughter of Jairus or that of the son of the widow of Nain. If we are right in our reconstruction of the outline of the life of Jesus, the incidents at Bethany occurred while ten of the Apostles were away from Jesus gaining experience in missionary work. Only Thomas and Matthew were with him. This is, probably, why no account of the sickness and raising of Lazarus is found in the Synoptic Gospels. Matthew, we believe, when he wrote his "Oracles of the Lord," included in it only sayings of the Master, and Peter, from whom Mark obtained his information as to Jesus' work, was not with Jesus at this time.

messenger found him somewhere in Peræa and informed him of the illness of his friend.

Jesus was not unmindful of the claims of friendship. He loved the little family at Bethany, but it seems probable that the messengers from Bethany arrived just as the Seventy whom Jesus had sent out to preach were returning to him. The weeks were passing swiftly; the fateful Passover time would come not many weeks hence; the time of Jesus was short; he must attend first to the great affairs of the Kingdom by first receiving the report of the Seventy. Two days, therefore, passed before Jesus was free to start for Bethany. During this time Lazarus fell into a comatose state, which was mistaken by his sisters and their friends for death, and was buried. Jesus himself tells us that it was only a sleep (John 11: 11). It is quite unnecessary to suppose that Lazarus was really dead; that was only the belief of Palestinian peasants.

Jesus, having received the Seventy, having given them the teaching noted in the last chapter, and experienced the exaltation of spirit there recorded, started for Jerusalem. His journey, if we have rightly grouped the events in this part of his life, was not without incident. At one point of the journey, as he came near the boundaries of Galilee and Samaria, ten lepers met him near an unnamed village and cried to him from afar to have mercy on them. He directed them to go and show themselves to the priest and offer for their cleansing the sacrifices demanded in the Pentateuchal law. The men had such faith in Jesus that they obeyed him. They started to find the priest, who was probably at Jerusalem, two or three days' journey distant, and, as they went, the influence of their faith wrought the cure of the skin diseases from which they were suffering. It will be re-

membered that all sorts of skin diseases were classed as leprosy.<sup>1</sup> One of these men, a despised Samaritan, when he realized that he was healed, turned back, looked Jesus up, glorified God for his cure, and fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Jesus was deeply touched by his gratitude. Of the ten, only the heretical Samaritan had the nobility of feeling to come back and thank his benefactor!

As he journeyed on toward Jerusalem, some plied Jesus with questions. They asked him if the kingdom of God would appear right away. He told them that the kingdom of God did not come in a form such that men could see it; that the kingdom of God is within. He did go on to say that the kingdom could not come till the Son of Man had suffered, but that, when it did come, every one would know it. On the way, too, he gave those about him some teaching about prayer. Then as now, people prayed for something and, because they did not immediately get it, they lost faith in prayer and ceased to pray. Jesus, therefore, told them the story of an unjust judge, who refused for a long time to do justice to a certain poor widow, but who was finally, by her persistent requests, persuaded to grant her petition. Jesus did not mean that God is an unjust Judge; he only meant to teach that, if persistence has such power with a bad man, it will have much more power with a just God.

Somewhere on the journey he saw certain Pharisees, exhibiting their satisfaction in their own righteousness and their contempt for others—"the people of the land," as they called them. He accordingly told the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican—the two men who went up into the Temple to pray. One was a self-satisfied Pharisee, the other a despised and hated publican. One

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XIX, p. 144.



said "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess." The Pharisee did not think of God; he thought only of himself. He did not compare himself with God; only with other men. He worshiped only himself. His heart was not exalted; his motives not cleansed. The publican, on the other hand, knew that he had nothing of which to boast. His thoughts dwelt upon God and God's perfections. He dared not look up. He could only say, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." "This man," said Jesus, "went down to his house justified rather than the other." Then Jesus laid down a rule of life which we might paraphrase thus: "Conceited people shall be humbled; humble people shall be exalted."

With such discourse as this, Jesus came at last to Bethany. By this time four days had passed since Lazarus was buried. Mary and Martha were mourning, and their house was filled with many of their friends who had come out from Jerusalem to condole with them. The characteristics of the two sisters stood out in their grief as clearly as it had in their social life. The news that Jesus was coming at last passed from person to person. Some one, looking out from the hills about Bethany, had seen him winding his way up from Jericho. Word went from mouth to mouth, and some one ran and told the sisters that at last Jesus was near. When they heard this, Martha went out to meet him, but Mary sat still where she was. Contemplative and brooding in her moments of joy, she was in grief inert and melancholy. Martha, on the other hand, eager and active, met Jesus and said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died!"

There then followed a conversation on Lazarus, death,

and the resurrection. As that conversation is reported in the Gospel of John, we cannot be sure that it is just as it was spoken, for the author of the Gospel, as we have seen, employs some freedom in reporting Jesus' words. We do feel sure, however, that the great thoughts in this conversation go back in some form to Jesus. They bear the stamp of his immediate insight into truth, his faith in God, his calmness, and his supreme confidence. For centuries these thoughts have been one of the main consolations of those bereaved.

At the request of Jesus, they conducted him to the tomb where Lazarus was buried. It was, like so many tombs about Jerusalem, cut out of solid rock, with an entrance guarded by a rolling stone. As they went, the grief of the sisters found relief in tears, many of their friends were weeping, and such was the sympathetic nature of Jesus that he wept with them. When they arrived at the place of burial, Jesus asked that the stone might be rolled away. He then called Lazarus from his comatose state, as he had previously called the son of the widow of Nain and the daughter of Jairus. The writer of the Gospel believed that Jesus had called from the grave a man who had been dead four days, and, doubtless, that was the popular belief at the time in Jerusalem. Indeed, the tradition, as now recorded, reports that Jesus, after saying that Lazarus was asleep, also said that Lazarus was dead (John 11:14); there are, however, many reasons for thinking that this is one of the additions to the story naturally made to it during the seventy years between the occurrence and the writing of the Gospel.

This story of Jesus' friendship, his long journey to help, his sympathy, his insight into the great mysteries of life, and his healing, health-giving power is one of the choicest in the Gospels.

## CHAPTER XLIV

### JESUS AVOIDS HIS ENEMIES

(John 11: 54; 4: 4-43; Luke 4: 16-30; Mark 6: 1-6;  
Mark 7: 24-30.)

THE four Gospels arrange the story of the life of Christ so differently that it is not possible at a number of points to harmonize them. Any outline of the succession of events must, therefore, be at certain points uncertain. The order of these events which seems to the present writer most probable is, that Jesus had now reached a point in his ministry when circumstances had so shaped themselves that, for the accomplishment of his purpose, partial hiding, combined with rapid movements from place to place, was necessary. He had found it prudent to leave Galilee because Herod Antipas had superstitiously mistaken him for John the Baptist and sought his life. For a time he had labored in Peræa, which, though under Herod's control, was further removed from his residence, but knowledge of his presence there had reached Herod, and it was no longer safe to continue his teaching there. Gradually through the months the hatred of the Pharisees for him had been accumulating. In Galilee they had sided with the Herodians; in Peræa they had conveyed to him Herod's threats; in Jerusalem, their stronghold, they longed to put Jesus out of the way. The belief that he had raised Lazarus from the dead, for the moment, again centered the thought of the Pharisees upon him. Political and ecclesiastical forces were arrayed against Christ; sooner or



later they would accomplish his death. Jesus did not fear death; he well understood that it was a part of the great mission which he had undertaken. If, however, his disciples were to be prepared to carry on his work after his enemies had wrought their will upon him, he must avoid his enemies for a time longer, and impart to those who stood nearest to him more of his secret. Ten of the Twelve were still in distant places engaged in their traveling mission. He must effect a union with these and make sure that a chosen few understood the nature of his Messianic claims. We believe it was this purpose which controlled his movements for the next two or three weeks.<sup>1</sup>

At first, in order to escape public notice, Jesus with his two Disciples, Matthew and Thomas, withdrew to a little city called Ephraim (John 11:54). It was the Ophra, in the land of Benjamin, mentioned in Josh. 18:23, now called Et-Tayyibeh. It was situated on one of the easternmost of the hills of the central range of Palestine. To the east of it the ground slopes rapidly to the Jordan valley. Here for a few days Jesus rested. He and his Disciples could behold in beautiful panorama the Jordan valley and the majestic mountains of the trans-Jordanic country which rise beyond.

After a short rest there, Jesus and the two Disciples traveled rapidly northward through Samaria. It was on this journey, which probably occurred about the end of January (there were yet four months to harvest<sup>2</sup>), that the conversation with the woman of Samaria took place, the account of which we have in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John. We have to remember that that Gospel is not arranged chronologically, but topically. Jesus and

<sup>1</sup> This outline of the events in this part of the life of Jesus was suggested by the late C. A. Briggs, "New Light on the Life of Jesus," New York, Scribner, 1904, Chapter IV.

<sup>2</sup> John 4:35.



his Disciples, traveling northward, came about noon, weary, thirsty, and hungry, to Jacob's well, a very, very old well in the plain just to the east of Mount Gerizim and in full view of Mount Ebal. Modern travelers frequently reach this spot about noon and stop here for similar reasons.<sup>1</sup> Jesus was weary and sat down by the well to rest. His two Disciples went meantime to the neighboring city of Shechem, which lay in the valley between Ebal and Gerizim, to buy some food. Jesus was thirsty, and some sixty feet below him there was an abundance of cool water, but he had nothing with which to draw it.

While he sat, there came a woman from Sychar, a village at the foot of Mount Ebal, perhaps a mile distant, to draw some water. Jesus asked her for a drink. The woman at once recognized that he was a Jew, and expressed surprise that he should ask a favor of her, a Samaritan. Jews and Samaritans had, as a rule, no dealings with one another. As a result of this a conversation followed of which we have a report in the fourth chapter of John. As the conversation is reported to us, the writer of the Gospel represents Jesus as telling this woman, a perfect stranger, that he was the Messiah. As this was something that his Disciples did not yet know, we can only set down this feature of the report to the author's loss of perspective on this point. His differences from the synoptic writers as to this have been noted in other connections. Some other features of the conversation bear, however, the stamp of Jesus. When the woman tried to get Jesus to commit himself on the sore point in the dispute between Jews and Samaritans, as to whether Jerusalem or Gerizim was the right place to

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, G. A. Barton's "A Year's Wandering in Bible Lands," Philadelphia, 1904, p. 172.

worship God, Jesus gave utterance to one of the most fundamental truths in religion. "God," he said, "is Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The time would come, he said, when the temples on Zion and on Gerizim would be deserted, but the worship of God would still go on. In substance he declared that worship is in a way independent of temples; it is a matter of the heart. God seeks as his worshipers those who reverence him in genuine sincerity, whose spirits seek his Spirit.

Jesus and his two Disciples in due time resumed their journey and, traveling on northward, arrived at Nazareth on the eve of the Sabbath. Nazareth was one of the places where Jesus had been able to do no mighty work. The Nazarenes did not believe in him. They had known him as a carpenter; they could not think of him as a prophet. Jesus' own brothers shared this feeling. They did not believe in him until after his death. It is hard for us poor mortals to appreciate the glory in common folk, and especially in those who stand nearest to us; and the people of Nazareth, including the brothers and sisters of Christ, were very human. Jesus, who felt the end of his earthly ministry near, longed to do something for the people among whom he had spent so many years. So, although Nazareth was within three miles of Sephoris, the residence of Herod Antipas, he went into the synagogue on that Sabbath, and took his old place at the lectern and read the lessons for the day.

The prophetic lesson for that day was from the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to  
the poor:

He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,  
The recovering of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty them that are bruised,  
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

After the reading was completed, Jesus was for a moment silent, while all eyes were fixed upon him. Then with the words, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears," he began an address which made all wonder at his gracious words. But in spite of his eloquence, they could not believe that the wonderful words of prophecy were fulfilled by him! So they began to say, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses, and Judas and Simon and are not his sisters here with us?" Doubtless they continued, "What presumption for him to claim that *he* can fulfill all these glorious prophecies!" Jesus thereupon reminded them of an old proverb which ran, "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country." Then he pointed out that both Elijah and Elisha had been compelled to perform some of their most important work upon foreigners because of a lack of faith on the part of their countrymen. At this his old neighbors who were in the synagogue became so angry that they led him to the brow of the hill above the city to do him harm, but he, escaping from them, went on his way, marveling at their unbelief. Thus was Jesus' love for his townsfolk requited, and his desire to serve them thwarted.

The uproar in the synagogue at Nazareth made it important that Jesus should not stay in the neighborhood. The palace of Herod Antipas was only three miles away, and his public appearance at Nazareth would soon be known there. He must escape at once from Herod's dominions. The quickest way to do that was to go into



Phœnician territory to the south of Tyre. This was accomplished by a journey of a few miles.

Probably it was at this time that Jesus left the soil of Israel and passed into a foreign territory as described in Mark 7:24-30. This part of the Phœnician territory lies between Galilee and the Mediterranean coast. It is a narrow bit of country, geographically belonging to Galilee, but which the Hebrews had never been able to capture. On its soil Jesus was beyond Herod's power. Here he and his two Disciples remained for a little time, until the attention of the authorities in Galilee should be fixed upon something else.

Phœnicia was, however, so near that Jesus' fame as a healer had preceded him there; so, one day during his stay, a Phœnician woman whose little daughter was afflicted with some nervous trouble, that was believed to be caused by demons, came and threw herself at his feet and besought him to heal her daughter. Jesus' sympathy went out to everybody, but, apparently he wished to draw out a little expression of how this woman felt about the Jews and their God. This woman had lived all her life in the neighborhood of Jews. She had some degree of familiarity with their religious beliefs. Jesus would heal the soul as well as the body. Accordingly, to bring out the woman's attitude toward the deeper things of life, he made answer to her request: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." The woman's answer may be translated, "True, Lord; yet the puppies under the table eat of the children's crumbs." To the discerning insight of Jesus this reply disclosed the woman's soul. He said, "Great is thy faith. For this saying go thy way; the demon is departed from thy daughter." The evangelists tell us that from that hour the little girl was healed. The psychical power of Jesus had done its work.



## CHAPTER XLV

### THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE

(Mark 6: 30-46; 7: 31-37; 8: 1-10; Matt. 14: 13-23; 5: 32-38; Luke 9: 10-17; John 6: 1-14.)

THE stay of Jesus on Phœnician territory was brief. Soon, by a secret journey, he passed through Galilee, crossed the Jordan, and came to the eastern coast of the Sea of Galilee in the territory of the Decapolis. Jesus' absence from the region had not diminished his reputation as a healer. As soon as it was known that he had returned, there was brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech. The Gospel of Mark tells us in a vivid way the means Jesus used to heal him. He took him apart from the multitude where there was some privacy, put his fingers in the man's ears, and touched the man's tongue; then, looking up to heaven, he sighed and said in the Aramaic language, "*Ethpathakh*," which means, "be opened." The man returned to the multitude cured, and the people were greatly moved, saying of Jesus: "He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

It was probably at this time and place that the Twelve, who had been for weeks preaching two by two, came together with Jesus once more, and told him all that they had done and all that they had taught. Jesus desired opportunity to talk with them. This the eagerness of the multitude did not permit. Their needs were many; their hopes, revived by the healing of the deaf man, great.

Jesus, therefore, took his Disciples apart to a deserted and desolate spot, that they might have opportunity for rest and conversation. The journey was made by boat, and the people saw Jesus and his Disciples pushing off, recognized them, and followed along the shore. When the boat reached its destination, therefore, a throng had already gathered at the place, and still others were coming. The eagerness of the multitude touched the heart of Jesus. He thought of them as sheep without a shepherd, so he spent the day teaching them many things.

When the evening drew near, the Disciples begged Jesus to send the people away, but we are told that he declared that they ought, before leaving for their homes, some of which were distant, to have something to eat, and that he took what little food could be found in the company, blessed it, multiplied it, and fed the whole multitude. The account of this wonderful work of Jesus is told more often than any other incident in his life. It appears six times in the pages of the Gospels. Once in each of the four Gospels it is said that with five loaves and two fishes he fed five thousand people, and in Matthew and Mark a variant of the narrative represents him as feeding four thousand people with seven loaves and a few small fishes. Nothing in the life of Jesus is better attested than this.

These facts have, in this scientific age, perplexed many devout people. The more we learn of God's ways of working by studying his works, the more certain it seems that nature's laws are God's habitual ways of acting, and, so far as we can learn from study based on accurate observation, he does not vary them. While our modern knowledge of faith-healing and mind-healing makes credible to us the healing miracles of Jesus, many keenly feel that the nature miracles fall in a different class, and can-

not be explained as really happening in the way they are described. This miracle of the feeding of the multitude is, as a nature miracle, especially perplexing. Many explanations of it have been offered.

(1) It is said that in the ancient world, which possessed no knowledge of natural law, it was expected that every religious teacher or holy man should perform miracles, and, since the merest hearsay evidence was regarded as sufficient ground for believing in a miracle, stories of miracles naturally grew up about every person of striking personality or of peculiar sanctity. The story of the feeding of the five thousand, some have urged, grew up under the influence of this atmosphere, without real foundation in fact.

(2) Others, holding almost the same views, find the motive for the telling of such a story about Jesus as this, in the desire to represent him as outdoing the deeds attributed to Elijah and Elisha in the Old Testament. Such people make much of II Kings 4: 42-44. It should be noted that, on purely historical grounds, neither of these explanations is wholly satisfactory. One may grant that the expectation of miracle led men to magnify natural occurrences into miracle; he may grant that the comparison with Elijah and Elisha may possibly have had some influence; but one who tests the Gospel records at all points by all available historical means finds them so simple and straightforward, that he is slow to believe that this incident could have found its way into all the Gospels without some historical foundation.

(3) Still others have supposed that the account of the miracle as it has come down to us originated through the misunderstanding of a figure of speech. Those who would thus explain it suppose that those who on that memorable day listened to the teaching of Jesus were so



absorbed in his teaching that they forgot their lack of food, and later, when they told of their wonderful experience, they described the way the teaching of Jesus had lifted them out of themselves by saying that Jesus had wonderfully fed them. Later, it is supposed, this figure of speech was taken by those who heard it literally, and so the story of a feeding with bread was substituted for a feeding of souls.

(4) Still others think that the difficulties of the story to modern minds arise from an exaggeration of the numbers. They recall how easy it is, as a story passes from mouth to mouth, for numbers to be exaggerated. They note that in two forms of the story the number fed is said to have been four thousand, while in the other forms it is said to have been five thousand. In two forms of the story the number of loaves is said to have been seven and the number of fishes "a few," while in the other accounts the number of loaves is said to have been five and of the fishes two. They, accordingly, think that what really happened was that Jesus and his Disciples shared their food with those whom he had taught, and that the people were few enough so that all were measurably satisfied, but that, as the story was afterward reported, the numbers were exaggerated. While one has to admit that either of the third or fourth explanations is possible, neither one seems at all certain.

(5) A German scholar suggested some years ago that the historical fact in the story was that Jesus administered to this throng a sacrament in anticipation of his death and of the institution of the Eucharist. This scholar believes that Jesus did not explain to the people the meaning of the sacrament and hence it was misunderstood and so grew into the narrative of the miracle which we now have. This theory is, in the opinion of the pres-



ent writer, very improbable. It is very unlikely that Jesus enacted a meaningless enigma before the multitude. Whatever he did appears always to have had some relation to the needs of the people to whom he ministered and to their understanding.

(6) Still others have reasoned that there is in the story no breaking of natural law. Jesus was, they say, God incarnate. In multiplying the bread and fishes he simply hastened natural processes. According to this view the multiplication of the loaves and fishes was simply an instance of rapid growth and multiplication. Even for the many who would be ready to grant that Jesus was God incarnate, this explanation seems very unsatisfactory. Dead fishes do not multiply by natural processes, and barley which has been ground and baked does not grow and multiply!

(7) Bishop Chandler, of Bloemfontein, South Africa, an ardent believer in evolution, has written a little book<sup>1</sup> in which he explains the mystery of this miracle, and indeed of all the miracles of Jesus, as belonging to a sphere of life that is above us, and is consequently not to be explained. He notes that in the vegetable realm things are natural which, from the point of view of a mineral, would be miracles; that in the animal kingdom things naturally occur which would be miracles for a vegetable; that in the human world things are done as a matter of course which would be miracles for an animal. Jesus, God incarnate, was, he holds, the representative of an order of life as much superior to ordinary human life as human life is superior to animal life, hence analogy would lead us to expect as normal for him acts which would be miraculous for a man. This is an argument which appeals to many types of Christians, but which naturally

<sup>1</sup> "Scala Mundi," London, 1920.

makes no appeal to those who do not share the Bishop's faith.

From whatever point of view one may look at this wonderful narrative—whether one looks through the medium of faith or of science—whether one finds an explanation which satisfies his reason or frankly confesses the actual occurrence a puzzle to him—one thing is certain: Jesus either did or said something on that day that made men feel in a most unusual way that they were in the presence of the manifest power of God. It was this which made an indelible impression and led to the six-fold telling of the story in our Gospel records. Any difficulty which a modern reader may find in the story arises from the fact that our theories of the constitution and order of the world differ from those of the men of the first century. However great this difference of theories may be, it should not and need not rob us of the power to appreciate the greatness and the marvel of Jesus. His matchless personality speaks to us by the very impression which it made on those who passed this account in its various forms on to us, and we wrong ourselves and impoverish the moral life of the world, if we permit a change in theories of the universe to dim in our thought the picture of Jesus, or to lessen his influence upon our lives.

## CHAPTER XLVI

### JESUS ONCE MORE IN CAPERNAUM

(Mark 6:47-52; 7:1-23; Matt. 14:24-26; 15:1-20;  
John 6:22-59.)

**W**HEN the multitude had gone away, Jesus urged his Disciples to embark in a boat and precede him to Bethsaida. This they undertook to do, and Jesus retired alone to a neighboring hill to pray. Prayer was the source of the strength of Jesus' life. God was very real to him, and after a day of strenuous labor—teaching, sympathizing, or healing—he instinctively resorted to prayer as a means of refreshment for weariness and of renewing his diminished power.

It will be remembered that on the Sea of Galilee high winds are often experienced, and that night, as the Disciples rowed toward Bethsaida, the winds were against them. They had to pull hard at the oars and progress was slow. The last watch of the night found them still toiling at the oars, and their destination not yet reached. It was then, according to the narratives of Mark and Matthew, that another nature miracle occurred. Jesus was seen by them walking on the water. They were frightened, thinking him a ghost, and cried out, whereupon Jesus reassured them, came up into their boat, and the wind ceased. Matthew adds to the story that Peter tried to go to Jesus walking on the water and would have sunk had not Jesus rescued him.

How is a modern reader to regard this story? It

creates for him many of the difficulties of the story of the feeding of the five thousand. Was Jesus superior to the law of gravitation, or should some other explanation be sought? Some have supposed that the Disciples were nearer shore than they thought, that Jesus was really walking along the shore, and that in the darkness they mistakenly supposed him to be walking on the water. Others think that this is only another form of the stilling of the wind by Jesus as told in Mark 4:35-41. Still others think that the story of the miracle arose from the materializing of figurative language. Of course others take it as literally true, and Bishop Chandler of Bloemfontein would justify this by arguments based on the theory of evolution. Whatever attitude a modern reader may take toward these explanations, two things are certain: first, the presence of this story in the Gospels is witness to the extraordinary character of Jesus and the impression which he made on those who knew him; and second, whether Jesus was or was not superior to the laws of gravitation has no bearing upon his spiritual character or the authority of his religious and ethical teaching. Spiritual and ethical values are quite distinct from the ability of a wizard to suspend natural laws and perform the tricks of a magician. The real character of Jesus and the marvelous insight into religious and moral truth which he possessed we know from other evidence. If he could walk on water, it would not strengthen that evidence. If it could be proved that he could not, it would not diminish it.

The boat in which the Disciples were crossing the sea seems to have been driven by the wind from its course. Instead of landing at Bethsaida, at the northeastern corner of the Sea of Galilee, they landed at the plain of Gennesaret, at the northwestern corner, between Mag-



dala and Capernaum. Here Jesus was at once recognized, and from the neighboring towns people hastily brought their sick to be healed.

After healing those who sought his help, Jesus entered the city of Capernaum, where for a time he had made his home. The Gospel of John tells us that here people who had witnessed the feeding of the five thousand came to him, and that a discussion with the Pharisees followed as to the nature of the real bread of life. In the course of this discussion Jesus shocked and startled them by saying: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves." The Jews and even the disciples of Jesus were offended or perplexed by it. It was, indeed, an astonishing saying, but it is one which the history of religion is helping us to understand. We now know that from the earliest times men have employed such language to indicate that they had obtained the intelligence, courage, and all the virtues of gods or heroes. The words of Jesus were accordingly a striking, even a startling way of saying that unless men caught his spirit and his attitude toward God and life they did not really live. That this was really his meaning is explained in John 6:63.

While at Capernaum Jesus had a discussion with the Pharisees about the details of the Oral Law. It came about in this way: Some Pharisees who had come from Jerusalem criticized Jesus and his disciples for eating with unwashed hands. The question at issue was not unlike that raised in the house of a Pharisee in Peræa with whom Jesus had dined some weeks before,<sup>1</sup> but now there were several Pharisees present, and Jesus took occasion to go more deeply into the principles which should control in such matters. We learn from the Tal-

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXXIX.

mud that, although there was no command in the Old Testament requiring such washing, the rabbis, after the custom became a part of their Oral Law, were very strict about it. To omit it would lead, they held, to temporal destruction, or at least to poverty. One rabbi who disregarded this law was actually excommunicated. Such strictness in matters which stand in no vital relation to religion or morality, combined, as it was, with a reasoning which often enabled them to disobey ethical commands, aroused Jesus' indignation.

This inconsistency he proceeded to expose, by citing a custom which then prevailed in Jewish circles, but which the majority of the rabbis themselves in following centuries condemned. By pronouncing the words "It is Corban," which meant a "sacrifice" or a "thing offered to God," the Jews taught that the thing or things so referred to had been vowed to God. A man might by the utterance of these words deprive his father or mother of all rights of support either from his property or his labor, and the rabbis of the time of Christ thought that the vow had to be fulfilled. Jesus forcibly told them that this "tradition" set aside the fifth Commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother," and that they were "making void the word of God by their traditions." It was a stinging rebuke, but in course of time the majority of Jewish rabbis took Jesus' view of the matter, and believed that, when the honor of parents is involved, one is absolved from a vow. This is known from the Talmud, which was compiled some centuries later.

In this discussion, however, Jesus went even further. He went not only back of tradition, but back of the laws relating to food in the Pentateuch itself. He declared, "There is nothing from without the man that going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out

of the man are those that defile the man." The saying was an enigmatic one and even the Disciples did not understand it. After the Pharisees had gone, they asked Jesus what he meant, and Jesus then explained to them that food, passing through the digestive organs, does not change a man's ethical character. Morally he is not "defiled" by it. He is "defiled" by evil thoughts, and these proceed from the heart or mind of man. By evil thoughts his judgment is warped, his will guided into sinful courses of conduct; he is then "defiled." It was thus that covetousness, lust, pride, foolishness, defile a man. Mere food does not. It is an utterance which reveals that surpassing insight which makes Jesus easily the Master of the world in religion and ethics, but it took years of experience and struggle to convince his disciples of its truth. At the moment its application to Jewish institutions, if perceived at all, was not convincingly grasped by their minds.

## CHAPTER XLVII

JESUS TELLS HIS DISCIPLES THAT HE IS THE MESSIAH

(Mark 8: 27-9: 1; Matt. 16: 13-28; Luke 9: 19-27.)

**B**Y this time it had become unsafe for Jesus to stay longer in the dominions of Herod Antipas. The fame of his cures of diseases, his address in the synagogue, and his discussions with the Pharisees had all set in motion rumors which would soon reach Herod, even if the Pharisees did not make to Herod a complaint against him. Besides, Jesus had some important things to say to his Disciples, which could not well be said in a place like Capernaum, where multitudes were thronging about him continually to be healed or to listen to his words. He, accordingly, left Capernaum and went with his Disciples northward up the Jordan valley to Cæsarea Philippi.

Cæsarea Philippi was in the territory ruled by a son of Herod the Great, named Philip. It was near the spot where the city of Dan (Judges 18: 29) had stood in Old Testament times. It is a region of wondrous beauty. It lies in a valley between the hills, where the Jordan pours forth from an underground cave, a river full-grown. Just to the northeast Mount Hermon, the highest peak in Palestine, rises to a height of more than 9,300 feet. For about eight months in the year it is capped with snow, and its white summit, an object beautiful in the landscape, is visible for many many miles. Herod Philip, who reigned from 4 B.C. to 34 A.D., had rebuilt the city and named it Cæsarea, for the Roman



emperor, but it was usually called Cæsarea Philippi, to distinguish it from the Cæsarea on the Mediterranean coast of Samaria. From Capernaum to Cæsarea Philippi is a journey which takes about twelve hours on horseback. As Christ and the Disciples traveled on foot, the journey probably occupied two days.

Jesus, having trained his Disciples for months as to the nature of the kingdom of God, and knowing that he must now soon be parted from them, desired to make them understand, if possible, the nature of his Messiahship and its relation to the real kingdom of God. So, during the journey, while they were resting by the way, he approached the subject by asking them, "Whom do men say that I am?" In answer the Disciples repeated what they had heard men say. Some said he was John the Baptist risen from the dead; others that he was Elijah, whom the Prophet Malachi (Mal. 4:5) had said that God would send before the Day of Judgment; still others said that Jesus was one of the old prophets risen again. After listening to these replies, Jesus asked: "But whom do you say that I am?" Peter answered: "Thou art the Messiah," or in Greek, "the Christ." At last Peter, this impulsive, good-hearted, human Disciple, had divined the Master's secret. This Master whom they loved, this worker of wonders to whom the afflicted flocked, this marvelous teacher, was the long-expected Messiah. The Gospel of Matthew reports some words of commendation which Jesus is said to have spoken to Peter for his insight—words which attribute that insight to a divine revelation—words, too, which show that, because he had perceived this truth in advance of others, Peter became the first stone in a new temple of God, and the first interpreter of the laws of life in the kingdom of God. These words of commendation are

expressed in Jewish and Oriental imagery and have received in the course of the centuries some strange interpretations.

Realizing how different his own ideas of Messianic work were from those of his Jewish brethren, Jesus gave his Disciples very strict orders not to tell any one that he was the Messiah. He knew that, if the report of this was spread abroad, it would create great disturbances in which life would be sacrificed. Having given his Disciples strict orders not to tell his Messianic secret to others, he tried to make them understand what the events of the next few weeks would be. The time of the Passover in Jerusalem was not far off. When he and they went to it, the chief priests would reject him, and would accomplish his death. That, however, would not end his work or his influence, for he would, though crucified, continue to live.

Such a Messianic career was so different from all their expectations that the Disciples could not believe it true. Peter, especially, elated by his success in grasping before others the fact of Jesus' Messianic character, addressed Jesus in a tone of rebuke: "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee." Jesus thereupon reproved Peter with the strong words: "Get thee behind me, Satan . . . thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." The term "Satan" means "opponent," "adversary." It was not easy for Jesus to face the suffering which he saw before him. He, like us, loved life and disliked pain. He had struggled with himself to bring himself to accept the course which he saw was God's will. The words of Peter appealed to the human shrinking from suffering which was within. It was for this reason that he repelled them with such vigorous language.

Jesus then went on to tell his Disciples that the course on which he was entering was in principle the one which all his disciples must follow. His words were: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." It is a universal law of life. Those who are unselfish and think of loyalty to God and of service to men more than they think of themselves, are the people who really live. They accumulate the true riches—the love of grateful hearts, clean consciences, and the approval of God. Love, service, and sacrifice are the laws of the kingdom of God. The statement must have seemed to the Disciples a hard one; perhaps it made the outlook for the future gloomy. We may be sure, however, that Jesus said to them much more than got written down. It was at least eight or ten years before the earliest account was written, and by that time only some of his most striking sentences were remembered. When we remember how hard it is for one of us to reproduce a conversation on the morning after it occurs, we are sure that on all important occasions Jesus said much more than is reported. On this occasion he comforted and instructed them with words such as only he could utter. Of these words all that are now recorded are, "There are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power." This meant that, though the law of the kingdom was difficult and seemed strange, those then living should see its beginning and the appearing of its power.



## CHAPTER XLVIII

### THE TRANSFIGURATION

(Mark 9: 2-32; Matt. 17: 1-23; Luke 9: 28-45.)

**J**ESUS with his Disciples remained in the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi for a week. Doubtless during this time he had many talks with them about the great things of the kingdom of God. It was probably during this week that he told them the story of his experience at his baptism and of his temptation. Jesus had so much to tell men of God that it was not his way to talk much of himself, but now the necessities of the situation demanded that he draw aside for a little the veil from his inner life and disclose to his Disciples the reasons for his conviction that he was the Messiah. If the Disciples were to accept him as Messiah, it was important that they should understand why he knew himself to be such, and also that they should understand the true nature of his Messianic kingdom. The simplest and most direct way to accomplish both these objects was to tell them of the divine call and inward assurance of divine son-ship which he had experienced at his baptism, and of the struggles he had undergone in the wilderness, when he determined what kind of a Messiah he would be and how he would use the wonderful power of which he had then so recently become conscious. It was for these reasons that he related to his Disciples during these days that bit of autobiography which now forms such an important part of the story of his life.



Later, when the Gospels were written, the story of the voice heard at his baptism and of his temptation was placed in their chronological position near the beginning of the Gospels, but we cannot be wrong in supposing that the facts were given to the Disciples during this week at Cæsarea Philippi.

Little by little, as the days passed, the Disciples began to understand Jesus' words, though they did not grasp their full meaning, but they did become somewhat accustomed to thinking of their loved Friend and Master as the Messiah. After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John, and with them climbed one of the spurs of Mount Hermon to pray. Probably it was toward evening. Leaving the Disciples a little apart, he went aside and knelt, in full view of them. As he prayed, a wonderful thing happened, which the Disciples did not at all understand. Possibly, as they expressed in Oriental imagery the impressions made on their uncritical minds, they made what they saw appear to be more of a physical marvel than a modern observer would have done, but this is how Peter described it to the Evangelist Mark: "He was transfigured before us; and his garments became glistening, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them. And there appeared unto us Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus." What is the meaning of this statement? What really happened here? It is both right and reverent that we should seek to understand it. In reply to these questions it must be said that, although we may not pretend to know all about it, two facts are clear. There was something unusual in the appearance of Jesus which attracted the notice of the Disciples and the story represents a new appreciation of Jesus on the part of the Disciples themselves.

As to the change in the appearance of Jesus, it should be noted that changes which were perhaps similar have been sometimes noted in mystics and in persons of unusual psychical gifts, when they experienced during prayer marked exaltation of spirit. Their faces have seemed altered, their forms changed, their figures glorified, and they are said to have radiated light. St. Luke, in speaking of this experience of Jesus, says, "The fashion of his countenance was altered." Matthew heightens it thus: "His face did shine as the sun." What actually happened to the appearance of Jesus was, then, in all probability, similar to that which has happened to others, only more extraordinary by as much as his psychical powers were greater than those of others. The three Disciples who saw Jesus that evening knew nothing of the experiences of mystics; they were so astonished by what they saw that they were unable to distinguish between Jesus and his garments, so, afterwards, when they came to describe the scene, they could only speak and write as they have in the accounts which have come down to us.

But, if this understanding of the event represents what really took place in our Lord, what is to be understood by the vision of Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus? One can understand how Jesus, gaining new strength in prayer and communion with God, could experience such exaltation of spirit that new light shone from his face, new dignity from his figure, and that his whole aspect was changed. But can we suppose that Moses and Elijah came to talk with him? One thing is certain: whether Moses and Elijah were actually there or not, this part of the account shows that the Disciples had gained a new appreciation of Jesus. Moses was the emancipator of Israel and her reputed lawgiver

—the founder of the Hebrew nation. Elijah was the first of the great prophets; his ministry began a new era which transformed the religion of Israel. At the beginning of the Christian era, Elijah was regarded as a kind of semi-heavenly guardian of the Jewish people. Moses and Elijah were the two greatest of the religious founders of the past. That these two ancient worthies should now seem to the Disciples to be there on Mount Hermon talking to Jesus, is clear proof that at last the Disciples were putting Jesus in his right place. They were seeing him in proper perspective. He had told them that he was the Messiah; he had related to them the experiences which led him to know this; now they had adjusted their minds to this fact. They placed Jesus in the same class as Moses and Elijah, the founders and heroes of their religion. He was greater than they. Moses and Elijah came to talk with him—to pay him homage.

Peter was so impressed by the scene and the experience that he wished to prolong it. Conscious that God was unusually near, he proposed to build three booths that the heavenly visitors might not depart. The rainy season was not over, and a dark cloud floated by and enveloped the mountain. Perhaps it thundered; all through the Old Testament time the Hebrews had regarded thunder as the voice of God. Now the thunder, if thunder it was, seemed to the Disciples to proclaim and confirm the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, God's own chosen Son. When the cloud had passed, the wonderful scene had also departed; the Disciples found themselves alone with Jesus, and Jesus appeared as usual.

How long Jesus and the three Disciples were upon the mountain we do not know. If it was evening, as seems probable, when they made the ascent, they did not come



down until morning, for, when they again reached the base of the mountain, they found a crowd about the nine Disciples who had remained below. A man had brought to them his son, an epileptic boy, and the Disciples were vainly trying to cast out the demon which, they believed, possessed the lad. As they approached, the boy fell into one of his paroxysms. Jesus asked the father how long the child had been so afflicted, and the father, after telling him, made this appeal to Jesus: "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." It was then that Jesus said, quoting the man's words, "if thou canst," as though there was some question of Jesus' ability: "If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth." The father then cried out with tears, "I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Whereupon Jesus healed the child.

Soon after this Jesus and his Disciples journeyed back again toward Capernaum, and, as they went, Jesus tried again to make them understand that great suffering and even death awaited him.



## CHAPTER XLIX

### JESUS' LAST VISIT AT CAPERNAUM

(Mark 9:33-40; 10:1-31; Matt. 17:24-27; 18:1-6;  
19:1-20:16; Luke 18:15-31.)

ON the journey to Capernaum from Cæsarea Philippi, the Disciples, many of them, and sometimes all of them, walked apart from Jesus, earnestly talking among themselves. After arriving at Capernaum, when they had reached the house where they were to lodge, Jesus asked them what they had been so earnestly talking about during the journey. At this question the Disciples with downcast faces kept silence. They were very human folk, these pupils of the Great Master. To them it meant just one thing for Jesus to be the Messiah; he would, they felt sure, be the monarch of an earthly kingdom. Naturally each one of them was ambitious. In a kingdom there would be offices to fill. Some of these would be of greater dignity and responsibility than others. Each was eager to obtain the most honorable place, and as they had walked along they had disputed as to which of them should be the greatest and obtain the most important post. They knew enough of the spirit of Jesus and of his point of view to know that wrangling over such a subject would not please him, so they hung their heads in silent shame.

Jesus understood human nature and he also understood his fishermen. He really needed no one to tell him of what they had talked. Taking in his arms a little child

and sitting down in their midst, he told them that no one can enter the kingdom of heaven unless he enters it as a little child; that he who would be first shall be last of all and servant of all; and that whoever receives in Christ's name one who possesses the childlike spirit receives Christ himself. While he was talking in this way John spoke up and said: "Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name and we forbade him because he followed not us." Jesus answered: "Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us." Thus did Jesus state a great principle, which his followers have often forgotten. Had they but remembered it, there need not have been such unhappy divisions in Christendom.

As Jesus continued his conversation with his Disciples he dwelt upon the figure of discipleship suggested by the little child, saying that whosoever gave one of these children of his a cup of cold water to drink should not lose his reward, but whoever caused one of them to stumble, it would be better for him had a millstone been hanged about his neck and he drowned in the depths of the sea.

The little company of humble travelers had arrived at Capernaum just at the time when the Jews were collecting the Temple tax. This was a tax of a half-shekel, which every Jewish man above the age of twenty was required to pay for the upkeep of the Temple. The tax was authorized by the law of Ex. 30: 11-16 and was collected each year in March. In Capernaum the tax-gatherers met Peter and said to him: "Does your rabbi pay the half-shekel?" Peter replied that he did. Later, when Jesus and Peter were together Peter told Jesus about it. Jesus thereupon asked Peter some questions which indicated that, as God's Son, he should, on the

principles of taxation which then prevailed in the world, be free from this charge for the support of God's house. Nevertheless, lest offense should be given, he directed Peter to go to the lake and catch a fish and obtain enough money to pay the tax for both of them. Some believe that the fish was sold for enough to pay the tax for both Jesus and Peter. By the time the Gospel of Matthew was written (the only Gospel which mentions the incident) the story was told so as to seem that Peter found the money in the fish's mouth, but many reverent scholars suppose that in the earliest form of the tradition this was not so.

While they were at Capernaum, some of the Pharisees tried to test the loyalty of Jesus to the Law of Moses. In Deut. 24: 1-4 there is a law which permits a Jew to divorce his wife, "because he hath found some unseemly thing in her." There was no question as to whether the "unseemly thing" might be unfaithfulness, for Deut. 22: 22 had provided that such a wife should be put to death. The rabbis had interpreted Deut. 24: 1-4 to mean that a man might divorce his wife, if she displeased him in any way. Some said that for a wife to spoil her husband's dinner was a sufficient ground for divorce. The question was keenly debated by the Jews at this time. In the generation before Jesus the two great founders of the Jewish Oral Law had taken opposite grounds with reference to it. Shammai, "to his eternal honor," had said that divorce was permitted only for unfaithfulness; Hillel, "to his eternal dishonor," had said it meant "all kinds of other reasons as well." Jesus, with his unerring vision for ethical reality, declared that Moses gave the Law because of the hardness of men's hearts, but that from the beginning it was not thus: that God had ordained one wife for one husband, and that what God



had joined together, man should not put asunder. In saying this Jesus sided with Shammai, and strengthened the position by arguments peculiarly his own. He reestablished the ethical basis of the family on a foundation from which in modern times men and women depart at their peril.

One day, while they were in Capernaum, as Jesus was on the street, parents tried to bring to him their little children that he might bless them. His disciples, thinking that Jesus ought not to be bothered with mere children, rebuked the parents. Jesus heard it and it made him indignant. He told his disciples somewhat sternly to let the little children come to him and not forbid them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. He said that no one shall enter the kingdom of God who does not receive it as a little child. Then he took the children in his arms, laid his hands affectionately upon them, and blessed them.

We do not know how long they remained in Capernaum at this time. Probably it was not many days. As Jesus and his disciples were leaving the city for their journey to Jerusalem, a young man who was rich ran after him and said "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" The question itself was very natural on the lips of a Jew, but his way of addressing Jesus was very unnatural; it was fulsome praise. There is no instance in the whole Talmud of a rabbi being addressed as "Good Teacher" or "Good Master." God and the Law are there alone declared to be good. In reply Jesus asked: "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God." Commentators have seen in this question of Jesus many difficulties. He was neither denying, as some would have us suppose, that he was sinless; nor was he, as others have supposed, say-



ing that he could not accept such an epithet unless it were uttered by one who recognized him as God. Jesus was simply directing the man's thoughts to God as the perfect Good and the source of all goodness. The man was young, and, like many young people, he was too self-confident. Jesus would direct his thought away from himself to God. Having done this, Jesus said to him, "Thou knowest the commandments, 'Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor thy father and thy mother.'" The young man replied, "Teacher, (he omitted the "good" now), all these things have I observed from my youth." Then Jesus, looking upon him, loved him. He was so eager, and possessed of such noble possibilities! Perhaps he might be the material out of which saints are made. So Jesus decided to apply to him a supreme test. "One thing," said he, "thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." When he heard that, the young man's countenance fell. He was very rich. He could not make up his mind to part with his wealth. Sorrowfully turning, he went away. The supreme choice had come to him, and, though he longed for the life of the spirit, he could not bear to separate himself from the things which minister comfort to the flesh.

As Jesus looked after him, he said to the disciples, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Then, seeing that the disciples were amazed at his words, the Master added, "Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." In their astonishment the disciples said,

"Who, then, can be saved?" Jesus answered, "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible."

Then Peter said, "Lo, we have left all and followed thee." He said no more, but Jesus understood the thought that was in his mind, which the Gospel of Matthew puts into words. Peter wanted to ask if he and the other disciples would gain eternal life. Jesus replied in substance: "Yes: you and all who leave home and kindred for me will not only gain eternal life, but you will have abundant rewards in this world, too. In the love and good will of men and women you will find friends—brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers. Their houses will become yours; you will not want, though persecution will be your lot."

Jesus then proceeded to teach the Disciples that in God's kingdom rewards will not be bestowed in accordance with human expectations, but many who here seem to be first, will there appear last, and many who here seem to be last, will there stand first. In order to drive home this thought, he spoke the parable of the farmer who went out to hire laborers to work in his vineyard, and who hired men early in the morning at a denarius (about seventeen cents) a day. That was in the time of Jesus the common wage of a day laborer. Then at nine o'clock, twelve o'clock, and again at five in the afternoon, finding others idle in the market-place of his village, he sent them to work in his vineyard. Then at evening he paid them each a denarius. Naturally those who had worked all day complained that it was unfair for those who had worked but an hour to receive the same pay as those who had toiled through the hot sunshine for twelve hours, but the owner of the vineyard informed them that they had received the pay promised

them, and that they had no cause of complaint; if he saw fit to treat with unexpected generosity those who had worked but an hour, he had the right to do so.

In this reply Jesus makes the owner of the vineyard, who in the parable represents God, fall back upon his property rights. Every person situated like the owner of this vineyard would feel that, so long as he paid some men what he promised to, he was at liberty to treat others generously, if he chose to do so. God as owner and sovereign of the world has a right to do the same. To the ancient Oriental mind, that would be a sufficient answer, but to the modern mind it does not seem so satisfactory. We instinctively feel that in the mind of God there must be some good reason for the inequalities of the rewards men get in this world.

Jesus, in his remarks about the poor widow and her two mites, which will be treated in a later chapter,<sup>1</sup> seems to give the desired explanation. In his sight all service is not equally valuable. We can see that an hour's work by a skillful surgeon, who has spent years to perfect his skill, is worth more than the same amount of work performed by one who never learned to do anything at all. God's standards of value are measured, not only by the cost of the service in suffering, but by the depth of love and devotion from which the service springs. Then, too, it should be remembered that often the best reward for such love and devotion is the freedom from temptation which a lack of great wealth brings.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter LIV, p. 336.



## CHAPTER L

### JESUS' LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

(Mark 10:32-52; Matt. 20:17-34; 25:14-30; Luke 18:31-19:28.)

**A**FTER a short stay in Capernaum, it became necessary, if Jesus and the Disciples would reach Jerusalem in time for the Passover, for them to continue their journey southward. This they accordingly did. Jesus fully realized that he was going to Jerusalem to die. No martyr ever approached the stake with greater certainty of death than that with which Jesus went up to Jerusalem at this time. If we admire the heroism of those who deliberately and unflinchingly face certain death for love or for truth, we must admire the heroism of Jesus. He went steadily to a fate which he foresaw, not cheered by martial music and the shouts of sympathetic companions, but practically alone. His Disciples were there to be sure, but, though well meaning, they did not understand.

Absorbed in his thoughts, Jesus walked on before his companions. They noticed something unusual in his mien. He had a look or an air about him which amazed them. Just what it was we do not know. It may have been a new look on his face, a new light in his eye, or a new determination in his walk—it may have been all these and more, but as the Disciples followed, they were afraid.

The route lay around the western shore of the Sea of



Galilee (though possibly friendly fishermen rowed them from Capernaum, on the northern shore, down to the south end of the Sea), then straight down the Jordan valley to Jericho. It was a journey of about three days. As the little party paused for rest, probably when they encamped on the first night, Jesus endeavored to make the Disciples understand that he was going to Jerusalem, not to a throne, but to death. "Behold," he said, "we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles: and they shall mock him, and shall spit upon him, and shall scourge him, and shall kill him; and after three days he shall rise again." The Gospel of Luke tells us that his hearers understood none of these things, and, from what happened the next day, it is evident that their thoughts were too full of other visions of the Messiah for them to take these words of Jesus seriously.

Scholars have sometimes found difficulties in the prediction of Jesus that he would rise again after three days. The words "after three days," as has previously been said, may be a Jewish idiom for "in the future." There is, however, no reason to doubt, whatever may be one's theology, that Jesus was certain that he would rise again. Every Pharisee believed in the resurrection. Jesus' Messiahship would naturally give him a more sure belief in his own resurrection. He had come into the world to fulfill God's great Messianic purpose—a purpose which Israel had, he was convinced, sorely misunderstood. He saw death staring him in the face, but God's purpose could not be thwarted. He would rise again in the future to carry on the work God had assigned him. He would survive the worst his enemies could do, and would fulfill the Father's will. This is what his words mean,

and no one need doubt that, as he bravely faced death, he was sustained by this faith. The minds of the Disciples were, however, full of visions of an empire, a throne, of palaces and provinces, and so his words fell on deaf ears. Before this, at Cæsarea Philippi, he had stated in general terms that he must die, but now as the event drew nearer, Jesus, endowed in unique degree with a sensitive spirit such as enabled prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah to feel the approach of future events, sought to impress their minds with the fact by supplying more minute details as to the method and manner of his death. The Master's efforts made, however, surprisingly little impression on the minds of the Disciples. If they grasped at all the thought of death, the word "resurrection" carried their thoughts back again to supernatural Messianic expectations.

The thoughts which filled the minds of the Disciples were revealed by the next event recorded in the Gospels. This apparently occurred on the next day, probably as they were encamped at evening for the night. Jesus and his Disciples were accompanied by relatives and friends from Capernaum, who were also journeying to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Among them was the wife of Zebedee, the mother of James and John. Zebedee himself may also have been in the company, but he is not mentioned. Zebedee and his wife appear to have been rather more well-to-do than the other fishermen who became the Disciples of Jesus, for Zebedee was able to employ "hired servants" in his fishing business (see Mark 1:20). The wife of such a man would naturally wish her sons not to be outstripped in dignity by common fisher-folk of a poorer family, like Peter and Andrew. If Jesus was to become the Messiah or heaven-favored king, this fond mother would

naturally regard it as the right of her sons to occupy the highest places of honor at his court, inasmuch as they belonged to a slightly better class of society. These social distinctions are keenly appreciated by such people.

The wife of Zebedee came, therefore, as they were resting from their journey, bringing her sons James and John. Prompted apparently by her, they began in true Oriental fashion by asking the Master to grant them whatever favor they might ask. When Jesus asked them what they desired, they said: "Grant that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand in thy kingdom." The question showed clearly what a chasm yawned between their thoughts and those of Jesus! They were thinking of glory and display; Jesus, of suffering, pain, and service. Jesus, therefore, in order to open their understandings by gentle questioning, asked: "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" It is obvious to us that the question was a figurative way of referring to the painful death which was now so near him. This, however, the two Disciples did not understand, so, with sublime ignorance of all that was involved, they said: "We are able." Jesus replied: "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it hath been prepared." By this he meant that to be near him depends on character and service. Such honors are determined by what one is and does; they are not granted as favors.

In this little company, nothing happened in secret. All the Disciples had heard the ambitious request, and naturally were angry with James and John. Jesus, accord-



ingly, called the Disciples about him and endeavored again to make clear to them how different were the principles on which his kingdom was based from those underlying ordinary political empires. He said in substance: "In worldly empires great ones rule and exercise authority, but it is not so among you; but whosoever would become great, shall be your servant, and he who would be first among you shall be the slave of all. For the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many." In these terse words did Jesus lay down the law of the kingdom of God. By them he also laid bare the secret of his life, and stated the principles on which alone an ideal social organization can be founded.

In due time the little band of pilgrims reached the city of Jericho, and passed through it on their way to Jerusalem. Jesus had been through Jericho or passed near to it a number of times during his ministry. Then, so far as we know, its people paid no particular attention to him. Now, however, the Master and his Disciples were accompanied by many other pilgrims, some of whom had, perhaps, been healed by Jesus and many of whom, because of his words, regarded him as a wonderful teacher. As the travelers passed along, some one pointed out Jesus to some citizens of the place, and word passed from mouth to mouth that the great prophet, whose fame had filled the land, was in their streets. A crowd gathered quickly to see him. They filled the narrow streets, and followed him out of the city. Sitting outside the city gate there was a blind man. Blindness is very common in Palestine, where the bright sunlight, reflected from the limestone rocks, is very trying to the eyes. As the blind were disqualified for any work the country afforded, the only resource of such



unfortunates was to beg. This blind man, Bartimæus by name, therefore sat begging. Though his eyes were useless, his ears were keen. He quickly detected the sound of multitudinous feet, and asked what it meant that so many people were passing. When told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he cried out: "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me! Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me!" The people about him tried to hush him up. He was but an insignificant beggar. They would not have him trouble the great prophet. The sympathetic ear of Jesus was, however, quick to hear a cry for help. He stopped, requested that the man be brought to him, and asked him what he wanted. The man, who had been so eager to come that he had cast away his outer garment or coat, perhaps to be stolen by the crowd, said, "O Master, that I may receive my sight!" Jesus said: "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." Thereupon the man's sight was restored and he joined the pilgrim band that was following Jesus to Jerusalem.

Another man in Jericho was very anxious to see Jesus. He was a rich publican, named Zacchæus. Publicans, it will be remembered, were people who collected taxes for the hated Roman Government. They often exercised to the full the opportunities which tax-farming offered for oppressing the taxpayers. Naturally, the Jews regarded one of their own race who took up this business as a traitor to his people. He was despised and avoided. There was, however, a good side to Zacchæus. How he came to go into the tax-collecting business we do not know. Zacchæus had heard of Jesus and felt a strong attraction toward him. Like the blind man, he heard from the crowd that Jesus was passing by, and thought his chance had come to see what Jesus looked

like. So he joined the throng. Zacchæus was, however, a short man, and short people are always at a disadvantage in a crowd. He could not see over the heads of taller people, and the throng prevented his getting near enough Jesus to see him, so he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree beside the road. Sitting on a limb of the tree, he could surely see the famous prophet as he went along.

In due time Jesus came to the tree and, looking up, saw Zacchæus. Much to the astonishment of the publican, Jesus addressed him, telling him to come down quickly, for it would suit Jesus to be a guest at his house that night. It touched Zacchæus deeply to be thus honored. The prophet whom he had admired from afar did not despise him because of his calling, but trusted him. The social ostracism to which publicans were subjected did not prevent this wonderful teacher from honoring him by becoming a guest at his house. This confidence of Jesus called forth all that was good in Zacchæus. He determined to be a better man, so, coming down and standing before Jesus, he said that he was going to give half of his goods to the poor, and, if he had taken anything from any man wrongfully, he was going to restore him four times as much. Thus Jesus, by trusting him, helped this man to a better life.

That night at the house of Zacchæus the talk of the Disciples turned to the great theme that was in their minds. Jesus had told them that he was the Messiah. They were near Jerusalem; it must be that the kingdom of God would be established right away and the hated Roman driven from the sacred soil of Palestine. It is hard to keep a secret. The Disciples did not mean to disobey their Master, but they could not refrain from entrusting the great secret of his Messiahship to many of

their friends, under promise, doubtless, of secrecy. As the secret spread, whispered conversations concerning the great event were carried on. It was then that Jesus spoke the parable of the "Pounds" or "Talents," the purpose of which was to divert people's thoughts from speculations as to external features of the kingdom and turn them to their own personal responsibility.

At least one feature of this parable is taken from an incident in Jewish history that some of the older people, who heard it that night, would remember. Archelaus, the son of Herod the Great, had gone to Rome to receive a kingdom and to return.<sup>1</sup> Some of his fellow citizens, hating him, sent an embassy after him, saying they did not wish this man to rule over them. In his parable Jesus goes on to say that before a certain prince departed on such an errand, he called his servants and entrusted to them certain sums of money. To one he gave five talents (more than \$11,500), to another, two (more than \$4,600), and to another, one (more than \$2,300). After receiving his kingdom, the prince returned, called the servants before him, and asked for an accounting of the money. The first came and said, "I received five talents; I have made by loaning and trading five talents more." The prince replied: "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in a small matter, I will make thee ruler over larger matters. Thou shalt become ruler over ten cities." The second came and said, "I received two pounds; I, too, have doubled my capital." The prince answered: "Well done! Thou shalt be ruler over five cities." Then the last man came and said: "I knew thee, that thou art a

<sup>1</sup> Two forms of the parable are given in the Gospels: one in Matt. 25: 14-29, the other in Luke 19: 11-28. In the text above an attempt is made, by blending the two to preserve the essential features of both.

hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow and gathering where thou didst not scatter; and I was afraid. So I went and buried thy talent in the earth for safe-keeping. Here thou hast that which is thine." Afraid of running a risk, for fear of meeting displeasure, he had lost the opportunity to be of use to his master. With a stern rebuke the prince banished the suspicious, fearful, unfaithful servant from his presence. By this story Jesus tried to teach several things. Some of them were that, when one thinks of God's kingdom, he should think of his own work and how he is doing it. Another is that God expects his children to work for the spread of his kingdom, and daringly to take risks in doing so. Still another is that God enjoys creative work and expects his children to enjoy it, too. He rewards the faithful doing of a job by giving a bigger job, and expects the worker, as he enjoys doing the larger work, to enter thereby more deeply into God's joy. If work is a gateway to eternal joy, lazy folk should beware!





BOOK VI  
THE PASSION AND RESURRECTION

Chapters LI-LXIII



## CHAPTER LI

### THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

(Mark 11:1-11; Matt. 21:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19.)

**I**F we keep to the sound historical principle of following the earlier sources of information, we must suppose that Jesus and his Disciples arrived at Jericho on Friday, remained the guests of Zacchæus over the Jewish Sabbath, which was Saturday, and started early on Sunday morning, the first day of the week, to walk the eighteen miles from Jericho to Jerusalem, for this is the order of events implied in Mark, Matthew, and Luke. As the Gospel of John was written so much later, we may, with all reverence, prefer the historical order of the others.

In the East the country people are up with the sun and begin their journeys early. The pilgrims from Galilee (and there were, as we have seen, many besides Jesus and his disciples) could easily reach Jerusalem by noon, or, at the latest, early in the afternoon. On the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, over which the pilgrims had to pass before reaching Jerusalem, lay two villages, Bethphage and Bethany. Bethany was the home of Simon, the leper, the father of Martha and Mary, and there is some reason to suppose that Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, had married and was living at Bethphage. All of these were close friends of Jesus. Doubtless as they had walked that morning from Jericho



the conversation among the Galilean pilgrims had been much about the coming of the Messiah, and, when they arrived at the Mount of Olives, Jesus determined to give in symbolic form a more public sign of his Messianic claim than he had done before. It was not so many weeks since he had been with his friends of Bethany and he knew what animals they had. He therefore sent one of his Disciples to borrow an ass. The language in which the directions were given and the mission carried out show that the donkey belonged to a disciple and friend of Jesus. It may have been the property of Simon or Lazarus; it is, at any rate, pleasing to suppose that it belonged to one of them. When the animal had been found, according to the directions of Jesus, and brought, they put their garments on him in place of a saddle, and Jesus mounted him and rode on over the mountain into the city.

The Galilean peasants, full of the idea that Jesus was the Messiah, remembered the words of the prophet Zechariah:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion;  
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem.  
Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.  
He is just, and having salvation;  
Lowly, and riding upon an ass,  
Even upon a colt the foal of an ass.”

(Zech. 9: 9.)

Remembering this, they naturally supposed that Jesus was going to declare himself king, according to their Messianic expectations. It was customary in the East, when a king was proclaimed, to spread rugs before him for him to walk over. In II Kings 9: 13 we are told that,

when Jehu was proclaimed king, the people, in lieu of rugs, spread their garments on the stairs for him to walk on. Similarly, now, the Galilean peasants threw their garments before Jesus, and brought branches from the neighboring fields and strewed them on the road. To express their enthusiasm and joy they naturally adopted the words of Psalm 118: 25 f., quoting them freely from memory and adding a prayer of their own. They said, in substance:

“Save us! Deliver us!

Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the kingdom that cometh,

The kingdom of our father, David:

Save us in the Highest!”<sup>1</sup>

The Hebrew words blended into “Hosanna!” mean “Oh save!” The words are, accordingly, not words of praise to Jesus, but of prayer to God. True, they were spoken because it was believed that Jesus was to be the instrument by which the salvation was to come; in that sense they were words of praise.

The kingdom founded by David had lasted but little more than seventy years when it split apart, but it had been a time so glorious that to it the thought of devout Hebrews always looked back as to an ideal. So, recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, these peasants naturally prayed that the kingdom of David might be restored, and that they might be saved, *i.e.*, delivered from their Roman conquerors.

Many students of the New Testament have asked: “Why did Jesus make this Messianic display, unless he thought that God would miraculously intervene, and help

<sup>1</sup> “In the Highest,” means, “Thou who art in heaven,” *i.e.*, God.

him to establish a political kingdom?" We may not presume to think that we can fathom all his thought, but we can see enough to answer this question. His act reminded those about him of the words of Zechariah quoted above. Those words were prophetic, when really understood, of a humble, lowly, peaceful king; not of a warrior and conqueror. The ass was an animal of labor and peace. From the time of Solomon onward, the horse had been symbolic of war. In reality the ride over the Mount of Olives was Jesus' last attempt to convey to those about him by symbolic act that which his words had failed to convey, that he had not come to be a conquering warrior or political king, but a lowly Servant and Prince of Peace.

According to Mark, Matthew, and Luke, those who took part in this Messianic demonstration were wholly confined to the band of pilgrims from Galilee, who had been traveling with Jesus and his Disciples, and who had at Jericho been thinking and talking about the coming Messiah during the leisure of the Sabbath. This is probably the historic fact. Later, when the Gospel of John was written, it was naturally supposed that the people of Jerusalem must have shared in so important an event, but in all probability the procession consisted altogether of Galileans, and made no impression on the city. If the Jerusalemites heard the shouting at all, they seem to have looked upon the scene with cold curiosity. A helpless Galilean peasant, riding on a donkey, surrounded by peasants as unimportant as himself, all of whom seemed deluded, and who were pitifully few in the eyes of the city people, may have caused them to be mildly amused, but they did not, apparently, take the matter seriously.

The effort of Jesus to say to his followers by act, what his words had failed to convey, had failed. Thus another



grief was added to the heart of him whom the world has called "The Man of Sorrows." The Gospel of Luke tells us that, as Jesus rode down the western slope of the Mount of Olives, from which one looks upon a beautiful and impressive view of the city, his heart went out to it. It was the city of his forefathers; the city of the Temple of God. There great prophets had spoken; there he, when a boy, had felt himself to be in his Father's house—God's presence. He loved it. He longed to help it; to put it on the pathway to peace and real happiness. He knew that he possessed the secret of a way of life that would accomplish this, but the folk of the city—priests, Pharisees, and people—would as a whole have nothing to do with his way of life. He had been unable to make even his Galilean peasants, who loved him and had lived with him, comprehend it enough to separate it from the national expectations. He had foreseen that Jerusalem would put him to death; he now had premonitions of the rebellion and destruction which the course she had chosen would bring upon the city. No wonder that his eyes filled with tears, and that he exclaimed: "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

After this stirring and affecting scene, Jesus went into the Temple and looked about. By this time evening was drawing on, so he went back to Bethany to lodge with his friends. Those who came from a distance to the Feasts were not permitted to sleep within the walls of Jerusalem.



## CHAPTER LII

### THE EVENTS OF THE FOLLOWING MONDAY

(Mark 11 : 12-19; Matt. 21 : 12-22; Luke 19 : 45-48; John 2 : 13-22.)

THE next morning, as Jesus passed over the Mount of Olives to return to Jerusalem, he saw a fig tree with abundant leaves and went nearer to look at it. The Gospel of Mark says he was hungry and thought that perhaps he might find on it some figs to eat, although it was not yet time for figs to be ripe. This is probably a misunderstanding of Jesus' purpose on the part of the writer of the Gospel, for one who understood nature as Jesus understood it must have known that figs do not begin to be ripe till about June and it was then not later than April. This misunderstanding of the Evangelist has led him to picture Jesus as praying, in a moment of disappointment, that the fig tree might never again bear fruit to feed a man—an act of petulance unjust even to a tree, if it was not yet time for figs to be ripe.

The fact is that fig trees set their fruit before they put forth their leaves. Here was a tree with abundant foliage. From a distance it looked like a tree that would produce much food. It, however, could not fulfill its promise. Its profession was false. It was like many lives, the outward appearance of which gives fair promise, but the fruits of which belie the expectations thus

raised. It was like the neighboring city of Jerusalem, with its fair professions and its cold, worldly heart.

The next morning, as the Disciples went again with Jesus over the mountain toward Jerusalem, Peter noticed that the fig tree had begun to wither, and called the fact to the notice of the rest. It is possible that what follows in the Gospels did not originally belong here. If it does, Jesus left the lesson of a false profession for them to draw for themselves at a later time. As the text stands he took occasion to emphasize a lesson which he had tried at various times before to teach them: namely, that faith and prayer arising out of faith produce results. As so often in his teaching, Jesus used for this purpose strong Oriental imagery. He said that, if one had faith, he could say to this mountain, "Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith shall come to pass; he shall have it." We literal-minded Westerners are tempted to take such sayings literally; we freeze this warm Oriental imagery into cold logical statement, and thus entangle ourselves in endless difficulty. Christ never intended it to be taken literally any more than he intended us to take literally "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle." Dr. Ribhany, who was born and reared in Syria, says "a Syrian never expects to be judged by what he says, but by what he means." In a country where such strong images are regularly used to give emphasis, no one misunderstands them. They give striking form to thoughts that might, if expressed in milder language, fail to arrest the attention they deserve. Such language on the lips of an Oriental is quite different from the "idle words" against which Christ warned his disciples. By "idle words" he meant malicious gossip, hurtful or impure talk. By this striking statement Jesus

fixed in the minds of his Disciples the thought that faith and persistence can accomplish that which seems impossible.

Jesus and those with him passed from the mountain and the fig tree across the brook, Kedron, into the city and into the precincts of the Temple. In order to understand what happened next, we should recall what was said in Chapter VI of the form of the Temple and its courts. The outermost court of the Temple and that into which one, on entering, came first was the "Court of the Gentiles." Into this court anybody could come, but Gentiles could go no farther than this. As one of the great Feasts approached, this court presented a busy scene. Here were for sale oxen, sheep, and doves; here were money-changers. Pilgrims were coming in and bargaining; sellers of sacrifices and money-changers were intent on gain. People were hurrying to and fro; all was bustle. The scene suited a market-place rather than a house of worship. Why was this?

No real Passover could be celebrated without a sheep as a victim. Then there were other sacrifices, some of which were offered daily, and others were for special and personal occasions. These sacrifices ranged from bullocks and rams to turtle doves and pigeons. In the early days of Israel's life in Palestine no one had lived very far from a sanctuary, all the people were farmers or shepherds, and each could furnish these sacrifices from his own possessions. Conditions had, however, long ago changed. When all sanctuaries were abolished except that in Jerusalem, many people lived too far away to bring animals with them. By this time, too, Israelites were scattered in many countries and many had abandoned farming for other kinds of business. It was necessary, therefore, for pilgrims from a distance to buy their



sacrificial animals after they reached Jerusalem. There were places on the Mount of Olives where these were sold, but, if one bought there, he must bring the animal to the priest at the Temple, have it examined to see whether it had any blemish, and not only pay the priest for examining it, but perhaps have him pronounce it unfit. It was accordingly much more convenient to make the purchase in the Temple court, where the sales were carried on under the supervision of the priests and one could be sure that the animal bought would be accepted at the sanctuary. Pilgrims who came from distant lands, perhaps visiting the Temple for the only time in their lives, would not only celebrate the Passover, but present sacrifices for completed vows, and perhaps offer various other sacrifices as well. They would therefore buy a number of animals.

Another thing afforded an opportunity for great profit. While independent under the Asmonean dynasty from 143 to 63 B.C., the Jews had issued a silver coinage. These coins were called "shekels." A silver shekel was about the size of a quarter of a dollar, only about twice as thick; a half-shekel was about the size of a ten cent piece, only a good deal thicker. After the Roman conquest of Palestine the Jews were not permitted to issue anything but copper coins. All larger denominations of money, except such old coins as were still in circulation, were Roman or Parthian in origin. Then as now old coins continued to circulate. Although the kingdoms of Egypt and Syria had been subject to Rome for years, silver coins issued by their kings still passed from hand to hand. At various times different Greek and Phœnician cities had issued silver coins, many of which were still in circulation. Pilgrims who came up to Jerusalem to the Feasts from Parthia, Media, Babylonia, Cappa-



docia, Pontus, the Province of Asia (where the kingdom of Pergamon had flourished and issued its coins), Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Cyrene, Rome, Crete, and Arabia,<sup>1</sup> not to mention other countries, would bring with them quite a museum of different kinds of money.

This gave the priests another opportunity for gain. They insisted that the sacrifices should be paid for in Jewish money, which by this time had assumed in their eyes a semi-sacred character. Money-changers became, therefore, as necessary as an animal-market. These men did not change money for nothing. Some Jews had already developed that financial instinct which has made members of that race such successful bankers in the modern world, and large profits were made by money-changers as well as by the market men. All this business was in the hands of the priesthood, and, while certain profits were supposed to go to the Temple-treasury, there is reason to believe that that on animals and on money-changing went to the priests themselves, especially to the high-priestly family. When men get a monopoly of anything, they are always exposed to the temptation to profiteer, and most men yield to the temptation. These Jewish priests were no exception. They charged exorbitant prices and made enormous profits. It is on record that they once demanded about \$3.90 for a couple of pigeons, which, through the influence of Simon, grandson of Hillel, they afterward sold for four cents! Four cents was about the usual market price of pigeons at that time.

It was into this market, run on these conditions, that Jesus and his Disciples came that day. Here were pious pilgrims who had come at great sacrifice from the ends of the earth with hearts deeply stirred by the thought

<sup>1</sup> See Acts 2:9-11.

that now at last they were in God's very house, and these cold-blooded priests and their servants were greedily profiteering upon their piety! Here were devout Galilean peasants whose hard-earned savings were not only being wrongfully pocketed by the traders, but who were being subjected to ridicule because of their rude clothing and unpolished manners. When Christ saw it all, he was filled with indignation, and determined to drive the traders from the Temple. The earliest Gospels do not tell us what means he employed. The Gospel of John says that he made a scourge of small cords. It is improbable that the priests and their servants, unless overwhelmingly outnumbered, would give way without a struggle. Not only the Disciples, but the Galilean peasantry who believed him to be the Messiah, would, if any of them were there, aid him. More than this, probably most of the people about would side with him. The profiteers were most unpopular with the worshipers. Wherever one came from, he was sure to hear before he went to the Temple what high prices were charged in the trading booths. Perhaps we are not wrong in supposing that the whole crowd present sided with Jesus and his Disciples so that the booth-keepers, seeing that the situation was hopeless, withdrew without a struggle. There cannot have been anything approaching a fight or disorderly disturbance, for at the northwest corner of the Temple area a garrison of Roman soldiers was stationed to be in readiness to quell just such turmoil, and they did not interfere, but the act of Jesus, had the traders and money-changers offered resistance, would certainly have led to a physical struggle.

Jesus, we are told, then took possession of the Temple court and did not for the rest of that day permit people to carry things across it, *i.e.* to use the Temple area as a short cut from one part of the town to another. Until

evening he himself remained there and taught the people. He recalled to them the words of the book of Isaiah: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations"—that was God's purpose and ideal—"but," added Jesus, "ye have made it a den of robbers."<sup>1</sup>

These words show us Christ's estimate of profiteering. A profiteer is a thief, whether he asks an unfair price for goods, for the use of capital, or for the labor of his hands. In the eyes of Jesus the great profanation of the Temple by the market was that men, placed there to interpret God to the people and to help them to worship him, deliberately turned the place and their office into instruments of unjust gain for themselves. Against the presence of the market there to serve the people, he uttered no word. We can easily see from this what Christ would think of many of the methods of modern business. This incident in the life of our Lord also shows that he was not opposed, as many have thought, to the use of force to put down wrongdoers. He was capable, not only of mighty and burning indignation, but of vigorous physical resistance. That there was no blood shed on this occasion was because the traders and money-changers made no resistance. Had they done so, it would have occurred. That it did not, was, perhaps, due to the influence of his personality.

Naturally, on account of this day's doings, the priests were most anxious to arrest Christ. The multitude was, however, on his side, and the priests did not dare to do it. The people from near and far were astonished at his teaching and more began to wonder whether he were not the Messiah. When night came, he went back to Bethany.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. 56:7.



## CHAPTER LIII

### THE EVENTS OF TUESDAY

(Mark 11:27-12:17; Matt. 21:23-22:22; Luke 20:1-26; John 7:53.)

THE next two days were filled with discussions with many kinds of people—all opponents of Jesus or disbelievers in him. As soon as he appeared in the Temple courts on the morning after he had driven the traders from the Temple, a group of the chief priests, scribes, and elders gathered about him and asked him by what authority he had done what he did the day before. If Jesus told them that he did it simply by virtue of his authority as Messiah, they would surely misunderstand him, for even his Disciples had not understood his view of his Messiahship. He accordingly said to the group about him: "I will ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men? Answer me." Then they conferred together and said, "If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But should we say, From men—they feared the people: for all verily counted John as a prophet." So they turned to Jesus and said, "We know not." Then said Jesus, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

As this conversation took place in a court of the Temple, it was, no doubt, overheard by others, who, seeing a group of prominent Jews talking, came up to find out what the discussion was about. Having put the priests and their companions to silence, Jesus then uttered some



forceful parables. The first was that of the man who said to his two sons, "Go work to-day in the vineyard."<sup>1</sup> One son said, "I will not," but afterward repented and went. The other said, "I will go," but did not do it. "Which of the two," asked Jesus, "did the will of his father?" They answered, "The first." In reply Jesus told them that common sinners would go into the kingdom of God before them.

He then went on to say that there was a land-owner who planted and fully equipped a vineyard and let it out to farmers,<sup>2</sup> and who sent various servants at different times to collect the rent, which was to be paid in grapes or wine; but one servant the farmers beat, another they maltreated, and a third they wounded and threw out helpless. At last he sent his son, saying, "They will reverence my son." When, however, the farmers saw the son, they said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance." "What," asked Jesus, in substance, "will the land-owner do? He will surely come and destroy those wicked farmers and give the vineyard to others." The priestly group who had begun the conversation probably did not understand his full meaning, but they understood enough to know that somehow the parable was directed against them, and they would have had him arrested, but they remembered how the crowd had sided with him the day before and sustained his interference with their market, so, fearing the multitude, they did nothing.

As they were all still standing about, Jesus told them<sup>3</sup> that the kingdom of heaven was like a king who made a marriage feast for his son, and, when all was prepared,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 21: 28-32.

<sup>2</sup> Mark 12: 1-12; Matt. 21: 33-46; Luke 20: 9-19.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 22: 1-4.

sent his servants out to say to those who were invited, "Dinner is ready; my oxen and fatted animals are killed, and everything is ready: come to the marriage feast." But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his store, while some actually abused his servants. That made the king angry, and he sent his servants out into the highways and hedges and invited all whom they found, rich and poor, bad and good, to come to the feast. He also sent his army to destroy those who had scorned his invitation and abused his servants. Again, the point of the parable was too clear for the Pharisees not to understand that it was, somehow, directed against them.

There happened to be in the Temple court that day some Herodians, or partisans of Herod, from Galilee. They were Jews who looked for the revival of Israel's fortunes through the house of Herod. They were a political rather than a religious party. Probably their sympathies were, in a mild way, with the Pharisees. They now conferred with a group of Pharisees and formed a plan by which they hoped to tempt Jesus into saying something that could be regarded as a seditious utterance against the Roman Government. Having formed their plans, they came up to him with a very flattering speech. They said,<sup>1</sup> "Teacher, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any one; for thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of God: Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give?" Jesus said to them, "Show me a denarius." (The denarius, worth about seventeen cents, was, it will be remembered, the most common Roman silver coin. As has been said, it represented the value, at that time, of a day's wages for an un-

<sup>1</sup> Mark 12: 13-17; Matt. 22: 15-22; Luke 20: 20-26.

skilled workman.) The denarius bore, stamped upon it, a picture of Cæsar. The one they brought to Jesus probably, like coins of Tiberius which have been found, showed the features of the emperor Tiberius, and around the picture of the head of the emperor ran an inscription as follows: "Tiberius Cæsar, exalted of the gods, son of Augustus" (Tiberius was the adopted son of Augustus).

When one of them took a denarius from his girdle and showed it to Jesus, our Lord said, "Whose is this image and inscription?" They replied "Cæsar's." Then said Jesus: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Some have professed to see in this reply a statement that religion and politics have nothing to do with each other, but that is not Christ's meaning. His meaning has been well stated as follows: "Civil obedience, attested by the payment of tribute, no more contradicts than it abolishes the obedience which is due to God. The first of these duties does not interfere with the second. It is trivial in comparison with the second. . . . The kingdom of heaven is not to be established by violence, by rebellion against the established order. . . . One should pay to Cæsar the tax which attests his sovereignty, and it would be foolish to believe that God and his reign would gain anything by the rejection of an obligation of this kind." The debt to Cæsar was on a very different plane from their obligation to God. Jesus' questioners were astonished at his answer. They could only hold their peace. He had uttered no word on which a charge of disloyalty to Rome could be founded.

In such questionings as these, Tuesday passed, and, when night came, Jesus accompanied by his Disciples went out again to the Mount of Olives to sleep.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John 7:53.



## CHAPTER LIV

### IN THE TEMPLE ON WEDNESDAY

(Mark 12: 18-44; Matt. 22: 23-23: 39; Luke 20: 27-47;  
John 8: 1-11.)

**E**ARLY Wednesday morning he returned to the Temple. As soon as he appeared a number of people gathered about him and he sat down and taught them. While he was thus engaged a group of scribes and Pharisees interrupted him. They came<sup>1</sup> bringing a young woman who had committed a sin for which the Law ordered death by stoning (see Deut. 22: 23, 24). She had been caught and had been brought for trial. As hers was a capital offense, she would be tried by twenty-three judges. The men who brought her were probably assembling in the Temple court to try her, when, seeing Jesus, and remembering the indignity he had placed on their priests two days before, they thought it a good opportunity to put him to the test. He was reported to be merciful to all sinners; perhaps they could get him to commit himself to some principle that was in conflict with the sacred Law. So, bringing the woman up, they said: "Rabbi, this woman was caught sinning. Now Moses in the Law commanded that such should be stoned; but what dost thou say?" Jesus bent over and began to write on the dust of the court as though he did not hear them. This is the only time that Jesus is said

<sup>1</sup> John 8: 2-11,—a passage which clearly is not a part of the Gospel of John. Some manuscripts make it a part of Luke. It probably belongs at this point in Christ's life.



ever to have written anything. What would we not give to know what he wrote! As they continued to repeat their question, Jesus straightened himself up and said: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Again, stooping down, he continued his writing. Some have supposed that he wrote in the dust the names of sins of which the woman's judges were guilty, but of that we cannot be sure. These scribes and Pharisees were good men, only, like many of us, they were somewhat misguided and had not the clearest of moral ideals. They did not mean to be bad or cruel. They thought they were obliged to obey God's Law in cases like this woman's. The words of Jesus, however, set them thinking. Their own sins passed before their minds. Their consciences awoke. They were ashamed of themselves, and one by one they slunk away. After a little Jesus raised his head again, and saw only the woman standing there in her shame. "Woman," said Jesus, "where are those thy accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" She said, "No one, sir." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more."

There the story ends. We do not know its sequel. Jesus trusted the woman as he had trusted Zacchæus. She had grievously sinned, but he gave her another chance. Doubtless, if we could know the story of her after-life, we should find that she proved herself worthy of the trust Jesus reposed in her.

After the scribes and Pharisees had slunk away, some Sadducees came up to question Jesus. The Sadducees accepted nothing which could not be justified from the text of the Old Testament, especially the Law; they accordingly denied the resurrection of the dead and the future life. They came to Jesus and tried to see what he would say to one of the puzzles by which they proved,

with much satisfaction to themselves, the absurdity of a future life. The Law (Deut. 25: 5 ff) ordained that, if a married man died childless, his brother should marry his widow. "Now," said the Sadducees in substance, "there was a woman here, who, in obedience to this law, was married by seven brothers one after another. In the resurrection whose wife shall she be?" In reply Jesus said: "You do not, apparently, know either the Scriptures or God's power. When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven. Concerning the resurrection of the dead, did you never read in the books of Moses, in the story of the Burning Bush, how God spake to Moses, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are altogether wrong." The point of Jesus' argument was that, long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead, God, in speaking to Moses, called himself their God. As the Jews believed God was the God of the living only, it followed that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must be living somewhere. Thus from Scripture, according to reasoning which the Sadducees regarded as convincing, did Jesus put them to confusion. Perhaps, as some one has said, he answered them according to their folly, but the argument was acute by the standards of that time.

While Jesus had been talking to the Sadducees one of the scribes was standing near and heard the conversation. He was pleased with the way Christ had silenced them, for in so doing he had justified a Pharisaic doctrine—the doctrine of the resurrection. Perhaps this particular scribe was not one of those who had joined in the questionings which had preceded. At all events he seems to have been a man of good spirit and real religious insight.

He now asked Jesus<sup>1</sup> which commandment was the greatest or most important of all. Jesus gave him the same reply that he himself had received on a previous occasion from a certain lawyer.<sup>2</sup> He pointed to the great commandment of Deut. 6:4 ff., which the Jews called the *Shema*:<sup>3</sup> "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." "This," said Jesus, "is the first." "The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." With his wonderful power of separating real things from make-believes, Jesus selected these commandments out of the whole Pentateuch as the most important. The first states man's duty to God; it is the basis of religion. The second, which is taken from Leviticus 19, states his duty to his fellow man; it gives the basis of ethical conduct and its essence. As defined in Leviticus it applies, not simply to one's own people, but to resident foreigners. It would, if obeyed, abolish race hatreds and race feuds.

The scribe, too, appreciated genuine goodness, for he told Jesus that he had answered well, for to keep these commands is "better than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Jesus, looking earnestly at him, replied, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

All Jesus' questioners had now been put to silence, driven from the field, or won over to his side. Jesus himself now began to speak—carrying the war, so to speak, into the country of the enemy. First he asked them a puzzling question about the Messiah as the son

<sup>1</sup> Mark 12:28-34; Matt. 22:34-40; Luke 20:39, 40.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Chapter XXXVII.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter XII.



of David, which they could not answer.<sup>1</sup> Then, as the crowd, composed partly of his disciples and followers, and partly of scribes and Pharisees, sat or stood about, he uttered a scathing denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees as a class, because of the outward formality and ethical hollowness of their religion.<sup>2</sup> They kept the letter of the Law, they bound little boxes,<sup>3</sup> containing parts of the Law, on their foreheads and arms, as commanded in Deut. 6:8, but they were ambitious and conceited, and missed its spirit. He denounced them for shutting men out of the real kingdom of God, for being very careful about the details of tithes and sacrifices, but neglecting justice and mercy. He likened them to dishes washed on the outside, but unclean within; to tombs, whitewashed without, but inwardly full of corruption. He declared that they were genuine children of those who killed the prophets, and that the blood of all the prophets would be avenged on that generation. It was a powerful invective. The whole of it should be read to be appreciated. These words of Jesus followed naturally upon his act of driving the traders and money changers out of the Temple two days before. He knew that these people would accomplish his death. He knew it when he came to Jerusalem, but nevertheless he would expose them and with dauntless courage lay bare their real nature to their faces in the citadel of their power.

At the time he said these things, although he was indignant, his heart was tender. He could not think of the awful suffering that was sure to come upon Jerusalem without emotion. His address to the multitude,

<sup>1</sup> Mark 12: 35-37; Matt. 22: 41-46; Luke 20: 41-44.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 23: 1-36.

<sup>3</sup> These were called "phylacteries," as previously explained.



therefore, concluded with a loving address to Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto thee! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate." Thus once more did his baffled love find expression.

Before he left the Temple Jesus went into the court of the women, which was on the east of the court of the men, and sat down there. In this court was the treasury, or, as we should say, the boxes for offerings. As Jesus was sitting there looking toward the treasury, a poor widow came up and threw into the box two small coins called *lepta*, or "bits."<sup>2</sup> Our English Bibles translate it "mites." It was the smallest coin in circulation, and was worth about one eighth of a cent. Jesus noted the deep feeling of the woman; possibly he had known her before. Then he called his Disciples to him and pointed the woman out to them. Many other people were there and had been putting their offerings into the box. "All these," said Jesus in substance, "have cast into the treasury from an abundance which they did not need, but this poor widow has cast in more than they all, for she has given all her living." This was the last recorded incident of Jesus' stay in the Temple. He taught by it that God values love more than material things.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 23: 37-39.

<sup>2</sup> Mark 12: 41-44; Luke 21: 1-4.

## CHAPTER LV

### AN INSTRUCTIVE WALK AND A SUPPER

(Mark 13:1-37; 14:3-9; Matt. 24:1-25:13; 26:6-13 and 31-46; Luke 21:3-38; John 12:1-8.)

**S**OON after Jesus had called the attention of his Disciples to the widow who was casting her "mites" into the treasury, he and his Disciples went out of the Temple and started back to Bethany. As they passed through the great gate which led from the court of the Gentiles on the east into the Kidron valley, one of his Disciples called his attention to the great stones of which the wall was built and to the massive character of the structure. It was work of which every Jew was proud. Not many walls in Palestine were so well built, and any that might be compared with it were in the half-heathen structures of the Herods which a good Jew seldom went near. To the Galilean fishermen, therefore, the Temple walls seemed the most wonderful in the world. Jesus, as we have already noted, saw clearly the fate before Jerusalem. The political aspirations of her people must, if persisted in, bring upon her the devastating wrath of Rome. So he replied: "Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left here one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down." At this reply, the Disciples were greatly astonished.

The little company crossed the Kidron valley and sat down on the western slope of the Mount of Olives looking toward the city. A beautiful view of the Temple

and the city, with towers and domes gilded in the light of the setting sun, lay before them. As they sat there Peter and Andrew, James and John gathered about Jesus, while the others were somewhat apart, and said: "Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when these things are all about to be accomplished?" Jesus' reply may be translated as follows: "Be careful that no one leads you astray, for many shall come pretending to be Messiahs and shall lead many astray. Take heed to yourselves, for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in synagogues shall ye be beaten; and before governors and kings shall ye stand for my sake, for a testimony unto them. Your first duty is to preach the gospel to all nations. When they lead you to judgment and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand what you shall speak. Say what comes to you to say at such times, for the Holy Spirit shall help you. There shall be great persecution. Brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child; and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

"If, then, any man says, 'Lo, here is the Messiah; or Lo, he is there'; do not believe it: for there shall arise false Messiahs and false prophets, and shall exhibit such signs and wonders as to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Be careful; behold I have told you these things beforehand. Learn a parable from the fig tree: when her branches bud and leave out, you know that summer is near; so when you see these things happening, know that it (the destruction of Jerusalem) is near, even at the doors. No one knows just the time when it will be, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. Be careful, therefore, watch and pray; for you

do not know when the time is. It is as when a man journeys to a distant land and bids his servants watch; they do not know when he will come back. He may come at evening, or midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning. Watch, therefore, lest coming suddenly it find you sleeping.”<sup>1</sup>

Jesus then, in order to make them see the importance of watching, told them the story of the ten girls who went out to meet a bridegroom.<sup>2</sup> Weddings took place at the home of the bride; the festivities lasted into the night. These girls belonged to the household of the groom, or were friends of his family. They went out to escort him and his bride home. They did not know what time of night the wedding party would come along, so, taking each a little clay lamp, such as was used in Palestine, that they might make something like a torch-light procession to express their joy, they camped at a convenient point by the roadside and, after setting a watch, all went to sleep. The clay lamps were small. They held but little oil, and that was soon burned up. Five of the girls were thoughtful enough to take along some little jugs of oil, but the other five never thought of it. About midnight the sentinel awakened them all, with the cry: “The bridegroom is coming! Go to meet him.” Then all the girls got up, lighted their lamps, and started to join in a glad procession that was to escort the wedding party home. Before they reached the wedding party, however, five of the lamps began to go out. Then the five thoughtless girls said to the others: “Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.” The others said: “We have not enough for us all. Go and

<sup>1</sup> This reply is embodied in Mark 13: 5, 6, 9-13, 21-23, 28, 29 and 32-37. As the chapter stands other words have been mingled with those of Christ. See p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 25: 1-8.



buy some." While they went to buy, the bridegroom came, the procession was formed, and escorted him home, and the unprepared girls had no part in it. "Watch," said Jesus, "do not be like those foolish girls."

While they sat there he spoke to them the parable of the shepherd who separates his sheep from the goats.<sup>1</sup> He said in substance: "When the Son of man judges the nations, the good and bad will be separated as when a shepherd separates his sheep and goats, putting the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then he shall say to those on his right hand, 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took me into your homes; naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came unto me.' The astonished people will say, 'Why, Lord, there must be some mistake. When did we ever see thee before?' The reply shall be, 'Surely, inasmuch as you did it to one of my brethren, even the least important of them, you did it to me.' Then shall he say to those on his left hand, 'Depart from me into the abode prepared for such as you: for I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger and you turned me from your doors; I was naked and you gave me no clothing; sick, and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then the self-righteous ones on the left shall say, 'When did we see thee in any of these situations and did not minister unto thee?' The answer shall be, 'Surely, inasmuch as you did not do it unto one of the least important people, you did not do it unto me.' "

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 25: 31-46.

With this powerful parable Jesus, as the hour of his Passion drew nearer, sought to make his Disciples understand that he identified himself with humanity—with the world's poor, that service to them is service to him, and that, upon such service to God's helpless children one's eternal destiny depends.<sup>1</sup>

After talking thus with his Disciples, Jesus arose and they all walked on eastward over the mountain to Bethany, where, in the house of Simon called the leper, the father of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, they were all in-

<sup>1</sup> This discourse of Jesus upon the destruction of Jerusalem is in harmony with his teaching as to the nature of the kingdom of God and the nature of his Messiahship, which we have found in earlier pages of the Gospels. The early disciples were, however, so possessed of the idea that Jesus, if the Messiah, must come back on the clouds of heaven to establish an earthly kingdom, that in the Gospel of Mark, our earliest account of this talk with the Disciples, a little Jewish apocalypse, written in the time of the emperor Caligula, seems, so many scholars believe, to have been incorporated with the words of Jesus. Fortunately, it can still be easily separated. Its teachings are in some respects opposed to those of Christ in other verses of the chapter. This apocalypse consisted of Mark 13: 7, 8, 14-20, 24-27, 30, 31. It read as follows: "And when ye hear of wars and rumors of wars, be not troubled: these things must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: there shall be earthquakes in different places; there shall be famines: these things are the beginning of agony. But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not (let him that readeth understand) then let them that are in Judæa flee unto the mountains: and let him that is on the housetop not go down, nor enter in, to take anything out of his house: and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak. But woe unto them that are with child and who have nursing babies in those days! And pray you that it be not in winter. For those days shall be tribulation, such as there has not been the like from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never shall be. And except the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he chose, he shortened the days. But in those days, after the tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send forth his angels and

vited to a supper.<sup>1</sup> Simon, who, six months before, at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles,<sup>2</sup> had been banished as a leper, apparently had now recovered and had returned home. Probably he had not really had leprosy at all, but some kind of eczema which the law in Leviticus did not distinguish from it. The family owed much to Jesus and it was quite natural for them to ask Jesus and all his Disciples to supper. Martha, the devoted house-keeper and hostess, took pleasure in serving. Lazarus and, doubtless, his family were there.

While the supper was in progress Mary came in with a little alabaster jar of nard, a very costly kind of ointment, and, breaking open the jar, poured the nard over the head of Jesus. Some of those present (the Gospel of John says that Judas Iscariot was among them) criticized the act. What they said might be translated, "To what purpose is this waste? This ointment might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor."

Jesus, touched by her love and devotion, said in substance: "Let her alone; why do you criticize her? She has done a good deed to me. You have the poor with

gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of earth unto the uttermost part of heaven. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away."

The editorial freedom used by the author of Mark in expanding the words of Jesus was followed by the authors of Matthew and Luke, in whose Gospels still further expansion and modification are found. This is just what we should expect, for, on this matter Christ's most intimate disciples had failed to understand him, and ancient ideas of historical writing regarded such modifications as entirely legitimate. Fortunately, in this instance, the original words of Christ can be separated from the additions with a good deal of certainty.

<sup>1</sup> Mark 14:3-9; Matt. 26:6-13; John 12:1-8.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XXXVI.



you always and can do them good whenever you wish: but me you will not always have. She has done what she could: she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. I tell you that, wherever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this woman's deed shall be spoken of as a memorial of her."

We know that Jesus cared for the poor. He had that very afternoon been teaching the Disciples that the eternal destiny of men would be determined by their attitude to the poor. He valued love also. He knew how much the expression of love sweetens life. Under the shadow of the Cross, oppressed by the loneliness of his position, understood by no one, he was comforted by this costly expression of pure devotion. He would not permit parsimony, even in the name of the poor, to check such expressions of love either toward himself or others. There is a place in a life of love for delicacies as well as for charity.



## CHAPTER LVI

### JUDAS ISCARIOT AND THE CHIEF PRIESTS

(Mark 14: 1, 2, 10, 11; Matt. 26: 1-5, 14-16; Luke 22: 1-6.)

ON Tuesday and Wednesday, while Jesus was so successfully avoiding all the intellectual and theological traps that scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians set for him, and winning the admiration of the pilgrims in the Temple court, the determination of the priests and their friends to get hold of Jesus and put him out of the way had steadily increased. They were, however, a prudent folk, those priests. They knew how popular Jesus was, and, after consultation, they decided that they could not venture to arrest him till after the Feast was over. This decision, the Gospels tell us, they made two days before the Passover, a statement which, on account of the Jewish method of counting time, leaves us in doubt as to whether it was on Tuesday or Wednesday that the decision was made.

As has already been said,<sup>1</sup> every company of pilgrims who celebrated the Passover in Jerusalem had to buy a paschal lamb. As Judas Iscariot was the treasurer of the little company of those most closely connected with Jesus, it is altogether probable that the task of buying the lamb would be left to him. As Jesus had on Monday driven the marketmen from the Temple, it is almost certain that, even if they had come back again, he would

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter LII.

not have his paschal lamb purchased there. It is also certain that, as the lamb had to be inspected by the priests, and there were great throngs in Jerusalem all doing the same thing, Judas would not leave these duties until Thursday morning. In that year, 30 A.D., the fifteenth of Nisan, when the Passover had to be eaten, began on Thursday at sundown, and, lest they should trespass on the feast day, the priests on that day began the ceremonies connected with the evening sacrifice about half-past one in the afternoon. On Thursday, then, such business as Judas had to do could be attended to only in the morning, and, with all the crowds that were in Jerusalem, we may be sure that Judas, as a good business man, bought his lamb at the market outside, perhaps on the Mount of Olives, and brought it to the priests for inspection on Wednesday. The priests probably did not know Judas. To them he was simply a Jewish peasant. Doubtless while they were inspecting his lamb, they talked freely before him. Only a little way off in the Temple court Jesus was teaching. Perhaps, while they inspected the lamb, they could hear his voice saying, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Their cheeks flushed, their eyes flashed, they gnashed their teeth, they muttered to one another, but not too low for the sharp ears of Judas to hear, "Wait till the Feast is over and we will silence him!" Judas had his lamb inspected and quietly slipped away, but he could not help remembering what he had heard.

There is reason to believe that Judas did not mean to be bad. He was a good business man—a good manager. He was accustomed to manage; and he now, as many men have done before and since, simply from lack of understanding, became a victim to his own abilities. That which under other circumstances was a virtue in him,

thus became his eternal infamy. Judas, like the other Disciples, loved Jesus and believed in him. He was proud of him; he believed him to be the Messiah. If we may venture to try to reconstruct the working of Judas's mind it was something like this: "Jesus is the Messiah; that is certain. He has said so to us, and the works which he performs prove it. God honors him, and God would not honor a liar. But the Messiah is to manifest himself with miraculous power, blast the lives of those who hate him, and tread down his enemies under his feet. This Jesus surely has the power to do; his deeds show that. This his Messianic office demands; he must, therefore, do it. Why, then, does he not go about it? Why does he talk about dying?"

As he pondered these things on Wednesday night, the threat of the priests kept coming back to him. Finally he thought he saw a way to employ his skill as a manager to good advantage. He would create a situation that would compel Jesus to show his power as Messiah and set up on earth the kingdom of God, and he would at the same time punish those priests who hated him. He would arrange to seem to place Jesus in their power, but would, in reality, place them in Jesus' power. The situation would compel Jesus to exhibit his Messianic might, and the first outburst of his Messianic majesty would destroy these plotting priests. As he thought of it, the plan seemed altogether workable and desirable. Judas was a business man. Naturally he thought he might as well make a profit out of the priests, while luring them to their destruction, but it is highly improbable that he sold his Master for money. He misunderstood the nature of Jesus' kingdom, as all the Disciples did; he was impatient because Jesus, having the power to do so, did not set up the Messianic kingdom, and he mistakenly



thought that, by a little management, he could hasten an event which all eagerly desired.

That Thursday morning the Disciples asked Jesus where he wished that they prepare for the Passover supper. It appears that Jesus had previously arranged with a householder of means in the city, the father of John Mark, for a room in his house for their company. It was in this same house afterward that the early Church held its meetings (see Acts 12:12), though the owner had then died, and the house was known as the house of his wife Mary. Jesus had not told his Disciples of this place, nor did he do so now. He sent Peter and John, told them that they would meet at a certain place a man with a pitcher of water, and to say to the master of the house where the man entered, "The Teacher saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber where I shall eat the passover with my Disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready." Peter and John went into the city, met the servant as Jesus had said they would, followed him home, delivered their message to the master of the house, and were shown the room. Then they undertook the preparation for the sacred meal. In addition to the paschal lamb there was unleavened bread, wine enough so that all at the feast could have about half a tumbler full when it was diluted, and bitter herbs, of which the Talmud mentions five kinds. Probably Judas had bought these the day before, and Peter and John may have carried them to the house with them.

The chief labor of preparing the feast was to kill the paschal lamb and cook it. Before the incense was burned for the evening sacrifice or the lamps had been trimmed for the night, the paschal lambs were killed in the Temple court. The worshipers were admitted to the court of the



priests in three divisions. When the court was full, the gates were shut, and, while each worshiper killed his own lamb, the priests blew three blasts on the trumpet. Two rows of priests formed two lines from the bleeding lambs up to the great altar. One line passed up bowls containing blood from the dying lambs which was poured at the base of the altar, and the other passed back the empty bowls. While this was going on the Hallel (Psalms 113-118) was chanted by Levites. When all the lambs in the court had been slain, the gates were opened, the court cleared, and another division was admitted. We do not know whether Peter and John were in the first, second, or third division on this memorable day, but, knowing Peter's ardent, impulsive nature, we may imagine that they were in the first. After the lamb had been slain at the Temple, it had to be carried away and roasted. A Jewish temple at Leontopolis, Egypt, which existed at this time, had a series of ovens surrounding it in which paschal lambs could be roasted, but we hear of nothing of the kind in connection with the Temple at Jerusalem. It is probable that Peter and John had to carry the lamb to the house of their host, and that a part of his hospitality consisted in permitting them to roast it in his oven. This work occupied Peter and John during most of the afternoon.

Meantime Judas, brooding over the thoughts that had come to him, determined to take a hand in affairs. We think we are not wrong in supposing that it was his intention to create a situation which would compel his Master to reveal himself as the Messiah. Probably he had no thought of betraying Jesus; it was the priests whom he intended to trick and betray. So at some time, either on Thursday morning or afternoon, he slipped away, perhaps under pretext of seeing if the things he

had bought for the festival were all right, and made his way to the priests, and intimated that he could deliver Jesus into their power. The Gospels of Mark and Luke do not tell us just what he said, but, it is probable that he told them that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, and intimated that this was a claim, which, if reported to the Roman Governor, would enable them to put Jesus out of the way. He also seems to have said that he could guide them to a spot where they could arrest Jesus during the night with no fear of exciting his Galilean friends. Mark and Luke say that the priests were glad, and promised to give him money, if he would do it. Matthew says that they actually gave him in advance thirty pieces of silver. The term he uses implies that they were thirty silver shekels, each of which was worth four denarii. If this is so, the sum Judas received would be equivalent to the wages for 120 days' work. At any rate, Judas had the promise of money, if he did not actually receive it.

Thus, doubtless with good intentions, Judas yielded to his temptation, and entered upon the fateful course that was to make his name a synonym of blackest infamy for all time. Judas stands alone, only because he betrayed the world's Saviour. Every one who yields to a similar temptation, mingling craft and treachery, endeavoring to force God's hand, doing evil that good may come, classes himself with Judas.

## CHAPTER LVII

### THE LAST PASSOVER-SUPPER

(Mark 14:12-31; Matt. 26:17-35; Luke 22:7-38;  
John 13:1-17:25; 1 Cor. 11:23-26.)

**A**S the sun began to decline well toward the western horizon, Jesus and the Disciples who had not been sent to prepare the Passover, perhaps also accompanied by Lazarus, came down the western slope of the Mount of Olives, crossed the Kidron, entered the city and made their way through the city to the house of the father of Mark, which was situated on the western hill of Jerusalem, a little way to the south of the splendid palace built by Herod the Great. It would be between five and six o'clock.

While the peasants of Palestine usually ate squatting on the floor about a dish placed on a small, low table, the Passover meal was somewhat more formal. The viands were placed on a low table around which the guests reclined on rugs, each having a cushion under his left elbow. The right arm was left free to use in eating. As they assembled, Jesus said, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer . . . for I say unto you, I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come." By these words he expressed his conviction that the end of his earthly life was drawing near.

As they gathered about the table, the strife among the Disciples as to which of them should be greatest broke

out again. Probably their rivalry over this matter showed itself now in the effort to decide which of them should occupy the places next to their Master. Jesus, as head of the company, was the host of the evening, and the seats on his right hand and his left would be the places of honor. We do not know which of the Disciples started the discussion as to who should occupy these seats. Perhaps it was James and John, who had previously aspired to occupy these places in the Messianic kingdom. This strife led Christ to repeat the teaching which he had given when on the way from Galilee, and tell them that in his kingdom the greatest were those who serve, and that he himself was among them as a servant.

It is generally supposed that John as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" reclined that night at the right side of Jesus (John 13:23), but there is some reason to believe that it was Lazarus who occupied that place. We are nowhere told that Jesus especially loved John, but we are told that he loved Lazarus (John 11:5), and, if we follow the tradition preserved in the Gospel of John, the latest of the gospels, it is probable that Lazarus was that night a member of this select company. What the Gospel of Matthew relates concerning the supper also makes it probable that the place immediately to the left of Jesus was occupied by Judas Iscariot, for during the supper Judas appears to have been so near to Christ that he could speak to him without, apparently, being overheard by the others (Matt. 26:25). If Lazarus and Judas were put in these places, it was a distinct rebuke to the pushing ambition of James and John.

The Passover meal began with two thanksgivings, which were said by the head of the family, one for the feast itself, and the other for the fruit of the vine. After Jesus had pronounced these—our gospels mention only



the second of them (see Luke 22:17)—he gave the cup of wine to his Disciples and told them to divide it among themselves. The supper then proceeded. After the cup had been divided, it was customary for the head of the feast to rise and wash his hands. It was at this point that, so the Gospel of John tells us, Jesus girded himself with a towel and, as an example of that humility and service of which he had so recently been speaking, washed the feet of the Disciples, beginning with Peter. Peter, generous and impulsive always, was shocked that Christ should perform for him this menial service, and said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Upon that Peter's feelings rushed to the other extreme, and he said: "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head." Jesus replied in substance, "That is not necessary. The feet are symbolic of the whole."

It is probable that the ritual of the Passover described in the Talmud did not come into use in all its details until after the time of Christ. There is reason to believe that at the time of which we are speaking, a portion of unleavened bread, of the paschal lamb, and of bitter herbs were wrapped together and given by the host to each participant in the feast. This was the way the supper was eaten. This was the "sop" mentioned in John 13:26.

After they drank the wine, as Jesus was preparing to distribute the food mentioned, he stopped and, looking around with a sigh, said, "One of you which eateth with me shall betray me," *i.e.*, shall deliver me up to my enemies. We have had many examples of the exercise on the part of Jesus of what men now call "psychical power." He could read the thoughts and motives of Judas. The announcement which he now made astonished and shocked his Disciples. They each began to

say, as we may translate their words, "It isn't I, Lord, is it?" Judas, close to Jesus at his left, leaned over and said (so the Gospel of Matthew tells us), "Is it I?" Jesus replied: "Thou hast said"—an answer which in Jewish usage neither affirmed nor denied; it was non-committal. Then, so the tradition in John tells us, Peter, who was sitting near enough to "the disciple whom Jesus loved," so that he could speak to him in an undertone, said, "Tell us who it is of whom he speaketh." That disciple, leaning back on Jesus' breast, said, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus said to him: "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it," and, dipping in the dish some bread, roasted lamb, and bitter herbs, he gave them to Judas. Soon after this, Jesus said to Judas: "That thou doest, do quickly." Judas, feeling himself exposed before the whole company, arose and went out.

While they were still at the table eating, Jesus took some bread, blessed it by giving thanks for it, broke it, and distributing it among them, said: "Take, eat; this is my body." According to some ancient texts he said: "This is my body which is given for you." Then taking another cup of wine, he gave thanks for it again, and, passing it around said: "Drink ye all of it; this is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many; this do in remembrance of me." It was a solemn and holy moment. Jesus only understood its full meaning. For months the consciousness had been growing upon him, not only that he must die, but that his death was to effect the salvation of the world. Now on this last night with his Disciples, under the shadow of the Cross, he instituted this symbolic rite, which, perpetuated by the Church, has become the Eucharist or "Lord's Supper."

Many interpretations have been put upon Christ's

words as he handed the bread and wine to his Disciples. We may not presume to fathom all their meaning, but some suggestions of it may not be out of place. Early men in many parts of the world have thought that by eating the flesh of gods or heroes they gained something of the spirit and power of the beings whose flesh they consumed. Jesus came into the world to impart to men his spirit. If all men had Jesus' power to resist temptation, his disposition, and his ability and determination to do the will of God, the kingdom of God would already be here. He was about to die, and desired to leave behind an avenue through which during the centuries men and women of all degrees of intelligence might, not only keep him in remembrance, but imbibe his spirit—his life. He chose a symbolism which had been employed from the time of the cave-dwelling men. The bread and wine became, on the one hand, symbols of his flesh and blood, and, on the other, symbols of that life, spirit, attitude to God which Jesus himself possessed, and which he gave his life to impart to men. It is a symbolism capable of appealing to all men, whatever their state of education or culture, and has been for nineteen hundred years the means of helping an untold number to realize that they are in some degree partakers of the life of God and of the spirit of his Son.

After this Jesus sat for some time and talked with his Disciples. The conversation was in substance as follows: "You will all be made to stumble because of me to-night, just as the Scriptures say, 'I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered abroad.' Nevertheless, after I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee." Then the impulsive Peter said: "Although all should be made to stumble because of thee, yet I will not." Poor, ardent, self-confident, unstable Peter! How many of



us are like him! Jesus looked at him and said: "Truly, Peter, before the cock crows twice, thou shalt three times deny me." "Oh, no," Peter replied, "even if I had to die with thee, I will not deny thee." Whereupon all the others said so, too. They were thoroughly sincere, these loving Disciples, but the event proved that Jesus knew them better than they knew themselves.

In trying to make them understand the arduous times before them, he reminded them of the time he had sent them forth without purse or lunch-pouch. Then in strong Oriental metaphor he said: "But now let him that has purse and wallet take them and he that has no sword let him sell his garment and buy one." It was a vivid way of saying, "Be prepared for hard and deadly opposition." The Disciples, taking him literally, said: "Master, here are two swords." Jesus, doubtless with a sad smile, said: "It is enough!"

Then, according to the tradition preserved in the Gospel of John, Jesus continued to talk to them and uttered some of the most precious of all the words which ever fell from his lips.<sup>1</sup> He likened himself to a vine, his Disciples to its branches. If they would bear fruit they must abide in him. He told them that he was going away from them and that it was better that he should, for God would send, if he went away, the Comforter or Holy Spirit in his stead. He warned them of persecution and portrayed the service by which they would save the world. He bade them not to let their hearts be troubled; he told them he was preparing a place for them and ultimately they should be with him. He told them that God the Father, whom they longed to

<sup>1</sup> John, chapters 14-17. These chapters should be read afresh in their entirety. Although the language in which they are expressed is that of the author of the Fourth Gospel, the thoughts bear the stamp of the mint of Christ.



see, was like him. He offered a beautiful prayer for them and all whom they might bring to God. And after all this, when they had sung the Hallel (Psalms 113-118) together, they left the house of Mark's father, went out into the narrow streets of the city, and found their way to the western slope of the Mount of Olives. Mark himself, who was a large boy, perhaps seventeen or eighteen years of age, followed Jesus and the company out into the night. He, like his parents, was a great admirer of Jesus; he believed him to be a great prophet; he loved him. Perhaps some word of Jesus, indicating that his death was near, had reached him, and with the spirit of love and adventure strong within him, he wanted to see what happened. At all events he seems to have followed Jesus and his Disciples across the Kidron without joining their company.

## CHAPTER LVIII

### IN GETHSEMANE

(Mark 14:32-52; Matt. 26:36-56; Luke 22:39-53;  
John 18:1-12.)

**W**HEN Jesus and those with him had crossed the Kidron they went to an olive orchard on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. It is called in the gospels Gethsemane, and has been for centuries commonly referred to as "The Garden of Gethsemane." The name Gethsemane means "oil-vat" or "oil-press." It was given to the place because of the presence there of an important or large oil-press. Oil-presses were made by cutting a big vat in the solid rock. At one end there was an upright pillar of stone with a hole in it in which a horizontal beam could be inserted. Sometimes there were two such stones. When the olives were picked, the vat was filled with olives, and a long beam placed in the hole in each stone. These beams rested on the olives, or on stones which rested on the olives, and extended far beyond the vat on the other side. Stones were piled on the other end of each beam and thus the oil was squeezed out of the olives.<sup>1</sup> An oil-press was an important part of the equipment of every large olive orchard in Palestine, and the ruins of olive presses are found in all parts of the country. Some of them were made three thousand years before Christ. When we think of Gethsemane, then, we are

<sup>1</sup> For illustrations see G. A. Barton, "Archæology and the Bible," Plates 35 and 36.

not to think of a flower garden, but of an olive orchard, stretching over a part of the western slope of the Mount of Olives. It was a place to which Jesus had often resorted with his Disciples. Probably it was somewhat off the road over the mountain, and had a wall around it, so that it was possible to find quiet and seclusion there, especially at night. It is probable that Jesus and his Disciples, who often spent the night out of doors, had slept there at times on some of their visits to Jerusalem. Thither Jesus and his Disciples now retired. It was a place well known to Judas; he had often been there with Jesus.

When they reached the olive orchard, Jesus said to all, except Peter, James, and John: "Sit ye here, while I pray," and going a little way off from the others, he said to these three, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; abide ye here and watch." Then, going forward a little, but not so far but that they could hear what he said, he fell on his face and said: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." He continued to pray for a long time. The Disciples perhaps heard more, but these are all the words of his prayer which they have reported. As Jesus prayed he was in agony; he was undergoing an inward struggle, and the Disciples noticed that great beads of perspiration stood out upon neck and forehead and then fell to the ground. In the moonlight (the moon was full) the perspiration looked like drops of blood.

Why did Jesus pray in this way? It was not because he was not brave, but because he was so human. He really shared our human life. One of the mysteries of our mental and spiritual life is the ebb and flow of feeling. Sometimes we feel exalted in spirit and able to

do or endure anything. At other times, especially when tired, we are depressed and discouraged. Life seems hard, pain unendurable, duty appalling. There is much evidence that Jesus during his life had shared with us this ebb and flow of feeling. Weary with work, exhausted with hours of strenuous labor in helping others, it had always been his habit to seek during the night or in the early morning some quiet place where he could pray; and there, pouring out his heart to God and communing with him, he renewed his strength and regained the power to go back to his work. Now in this greater crisis, with the Cross so near, he instinctively sought relief and strength in prayer.

We cannot suppose that we understand all his thought and feeling; it was so deep and great as to be beyond us. Nevertheless we can enter sympathetically into a little of it. For weeks he had foreseen that he must die a violent death; he had bravely faced it and had come to Jerusalem, knowing that here death would meet him. He was, however, a young man. The currents of life were strong within him. His humanity was so real that he loved life, and now that he was weary with days of strife and discussion with adversaries, and had far into the night undergone the strain of uttering parting and loving words to his Disciples, the fate before him seemed to him in his weariness to be harder than he could bear. He was to be cut off in his prime with his work undone. Even his trusted Disciples did not comprehend God as he did or as he had tried to teach them to do; they had still altogether material and erroneous notions of the kingdom of God. It was a hard lot under such circumstances to die. Perhaps even he was tempted to think that he was a failure—that he had lived in vain. How he loved his Jewish brethren! How he



longed to open their eyes so that they might see God and life as they really are—might break away from traditional rules and hopes of revenge and material empire as the highest good God had for man, and enter upon their real spiritual inheritance of union with God in life and of service for the salvation of the world! He had tried to do this, but, instead of letting him lead them, their hearts were filled with hatred of him and at that very moment they were plotting his death. How he loved the world! How he longed to help all men to live the satisfying life with God that he had lived! But between him and the world stood his Jewish brethren. He had devoted his life for these months to them, and they were cutting him off before he could do anything for the unnumbered multitudes of God's children beyond Israel's borders. His tender love was baffled; his heart, sensitive to hate beyond our comprehension, was tortured by the malignity of his enemies. Then Judas constituted another element of his agony. He loved Judas and the double dealing of Judas stung him to the quick. Such are some of the sorrows which, we may reverently presume, weighed upon the soul of Jesus as, prostrate on the ground in Gethsemane, he sought strength to go forward and endure.

He prayed so long that the Disciples, watchful at first, fell asleep. Poor fellows, it was very late and, like all the peasantry of Palestine, they had arisen early the morning before. After a while Jesus arose, went to them, aroused them, gently chided them for their inability to watch with him for an hour, and then went back to his prayer. He was, however, very gentle with them. He knew that in spirit they were with him, though physical weariness made them sleep. A second and a third time he came back and found them asleep.

By this time communion with God had accomplished its work. Through prayer he had been refreshed; he had regained strength and courage. He told them that they could sleep on. Soon, however, he aroused them again and said, "Arise, let us be going: behold he is at hand that betrayeth me."

In order to understand the course of events, we must now go back in thought to the palace of the high priest. When Judas withdrew from the house of John Mark, after having partaken of the Passover, he went apparently to a place appointed; it was either the Temple or the high priest's palace. There he was detained until midnight or later. The priests had laid their plans cleverly to take advantage of the offer of Judas. It has often been supposed that in their eagerness to get rid of Christ they acted illegally, but recent investigations by unprejudiced scholars have made it probable that they were careful to keep within the forms of law. While it seems clear that at some points of their procedure they departed from the rules later laid down in the Talmud, we are not sure that those traditions always represent the actual practice in the time of Christ, and it seems probable that they had some precedent for everything they did. They accomplished the death of Jesus by legal means. Their sin was not that they went beyond the Law, but that they failed to appreciate and reverence the greatest, purest, and best person ever born, and allowed their devotion to their ecclesiastical organization and its traditions to goad them on to a judicial murder. In this sin, however, they do not stand alone; others have committed it on lesser victims many times in many countries.

Under the Roman Government the Sanhedrin, or Jewish council, had jurisdiction over the Temple and all religious matters throughout Judæa and Galilee. For the

purpose of keeping order in the Temple, they had a Temple-guard composed of Levites. They were a kind of Temple-police, and they were under the control and direction of the Sanhedrin. It was these Temple-police, who at an earlier time had been sent with Nicodemus to arrest Jesus.<sup>1</sup> This police force was under the command of officers who are in the English New Testament called "Captains"; the Greek has a word which is sometimes rendered "Generals." On one occasion in the reign of the Roman emperor Claudius (41-54 A.D.) they were employed in a conflict between the Samaritans and Galileans far from Jerusalem. It was this Temple-police that were employed to arrest Christ. While the Sanhedrin, with the high priest at its head, had the right to make an arrest by means of this police, they had no right to inflict capital punishment. That power the Romans had taken away from them. If, then, they would have Jesus legally put to death, they must arrest him and find against him some charge that the Roman governor could regard as a capital offense and convince the governor of its truth. They had a right to arrest Jesus with their guard for this purpose, and this they now proceeded to do.

Some have called the arrest illegal because they employed a traitor in order to find Jesus, but police forces in all ages and countries have made use of evidence that has come to them through such sources, and, if we condemn the Jewish authorities on that score, we should condemn practically every government that has ever existed. In order to carry out their plans the priests waited until after midnight, and then, at a time when all the populace and the pilgrims with whom Jesus was so popular were sleeping, scattered in many homes and

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXXVI.



camps, they sent a detachment of this Temple-police force, commanded by a captain and accompanied by one or more priests, to arrest Jesus. The force probably was not very large, though a few stragglers from the streets may have followed. There were not, however, many of these at this late hour of the night. To the boy John Mark, who appears to have been still watching near Gethsemane, it seemed in the moonlight like a "multitude" or as we might translate his phrase "a crowd" (see Mark 14:43). The force, guided by Judas to Gethsemane, came upon Jesus and his Disciples soon after Jesus had said that the traitor was near. As they came Judas went straight up to Jesus and saying, "O my Master," kissed him. The kiss was the sign by which Judas had told the priests that he would let them know which one of the group was Jesus.

As soon as Judas had kissed Jesus the Temple-guards seized him. Then the impulsive Peter, having one of the two swords of which the company were possessors, drew it and tried to attack the guard. The attack was, of course, repulsed. Peter succeeded in cutting off an ear of one of them. Jesus told Peter to put up his sword, telling him that those who draw the sword shall perish by the sword. Then turning to the leaders of the guards he asked them why they had come out against him, as against a robber, armed with swords and clubs. When he was daily with them in the Temple teaching, he said, they did not take him. Then he added, perhaps partly to himself, "this is your hour, and the power of darkness." Thus, yielding himself without resistance to his captors, he allowed them to march away with him to Jerusalem.

When the Disciples saw that their master was a prisoner and that they could not help him, they all ran away



and hid themselves. Their conduct afterward showed that they had a degree of courage, but they feared, especially after Peter's attack upon one of the guards, that they too might be arrested; so they fled.

As Jesus was led a prisoner toward Jerusalem, John Mark, who had been watching near, followed along. He had not, like the Disciples, taken part in the struggle in the olive orchard, and he hoped to see what happened and yet escape notice. He wore that night a fine linen garment without the heavy coat which usually forms a man's outer covering in cool weather in that country. As he followed along he was, however, detected by the alert guard, one of whom tried to seize him. The guard, however, caught hold of the linen garment, and Mark, slipping out of this, fled and escaped. Later, when he wrote his Gospel, he mentioned the incident, without giving his name.

Thus Gethsemane became the scene of the most sacred agony and of the vilest treachery.

## CHAPTER LIX

### THE EXAMINATION BEFORE THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES

(Mark 14: 53-72; Matt. 26: 57-27: 10; Luke 22: 53-71; John 18: 13-27.)

**A**CCORDING to the Gospel of John, when Jesus was led away from Gethsemane he was taken to the house of Annas, which was situated on the eastern slope of the western hill. Annas is one of the best known persons in the Jewish history of that time. He was once himself high priest for five or six years, and, after he was deposed by the Romans, continued to be even more influential than the actual high priest. He and his sons controlled the Temple market which Jesus four days before had driven from the Temple courts. This market was a source of revenue that helped to make Annas and his house rich. After the deposition of Annas from the high priesthood, no fewer than five of his sons filled that office. Caiaphas, who was high priest in this year 30, was a son-in-law of Annas, and later a grandson of Annas held that office. Annas was a crafty Sadducee, for many years a sort of boss exercising perhaps more real power than when he held the office of supreme priest.

We are not told what happened when Jesus was taken to the house of Annas, or why he was taken there. The events which St. John seems to place in the house of Annas are, by the earlier Gospels, said to have occurred in the house of Caiaphas. Perhaps the guards who had

arrested Jesus stopped to let Annas know that the ardent reformer whose zeal a few days before had so nearly ruined his business in the Temple courts was now actually within his power. From the house of Annas Jesus was led to the house of Caiaphas, a little further up the hill. The ruins of it were uncovered only a few years ago.

At the palace of Caiaphas the Jewish Sanhedrin or supreme council had been assembled. This council acted both as an executive body and a court. It consisted of seventy members, but when it sat as a court only twenty-three had to be present. That was probably the number present on this fateful night. Some writers have scouted the idea that the Sanhedrin could meet in the small hours of the morning, and have drawn ludicrous pictures of Caiaphas sending messengers around in the middle of the night to arouse its members from sleep, but such writers forget that the priests had bargained with Judas the afternoon before; that they felt sure of their victim, and had, no doubt, arranged for a quorum of the court to await during the night, at the house of the high priest, the arrest of their victim. Under the circumstances the meeting was most natural. Later Jewish traditional law forbade the night trial of a capital case, but there is no evidence that such a regulation was in existence in the time of Christ.

Peter, when he fled in Gethsemane, had simply sought to escape arrest; he had not abandoned his master. He followed along at a sufficient distance to escape notice and yet to see what they did with Jesus. He was accompanied, so the Gospel of John tells us, by "the disciple whom Jesus loved," who, as we have seen, may have been Lazarus. This disciple was known at the high priest's palace. This would be natural, if it were Lazarus, as his home was not far away; so he went into the

palace, while Peter remained outside. Later, using his acquaintance with the maid who kept the door, this disciple secured Peter's entrance to the court, where a charcoal fire burned in a brazier, similar to those still used in Palestine. Peter joined the group of Temple guards and officers who were warming themselves by the fire.

Meantime, Jesus was taken before the assembled Sanhedrin in an upper room and the examination was begun. The object was to obtain legal evidence on which a capital charge against Jesus could be lodged with the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. The priests could not employ Judas Iscariot as a witness, for their rules forbade the condemnation of a man on the evidence of a traitor, and, in this matter, they abode by their rules of procedure. Not all the details of the examination are reported to us. Several witnesses appeared and gave testimony against him, but their testimony was contradictory, and the law forbade the condemnation of a man on the testimony of one witness. The court, therefore, could make no use of this testimony. Then certain men came forward and said that they heard Jesus say: "I will destroy this Temple which is made with hands, and will build another made without hands;" but their testimony was so contradictory in details that they could not convict him on it.

What the Sanhedrin desired all the time was to obtain testimony that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah. As Messiah he would, in their opinion, be a rebel against Rome, and they could accuse him to Pilate of treason. That he claimed to be the Messiah, Judas had doubtless told them, for Judas knew it, but no one of those whom they could summon as witnesses had ever heard Jesus make this claim; he had spoken of it only within the circle of his Disciples. Finally the high priest, in order



to carry their point, arose, and, addressing Jesus with the language prescribed by Jewish legal procedure for addressing a witness (the Gospels give this in a very incomplete and abbreviated form), asked "Art thou the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus replied, "Thou hast said." While this reply is a non-committal answer, equivalent to "that is your say so for it," it was not a denial. That any man should fail to deny vehemently that he was the Son of God, the expected heavenly Messiah, seemed to a Jew presumptuous blasphemy. The non-committal answer of Jesus was, accordingly, taken as a virtual confession. The high priest therefore rent his garment in token of horror, and, turning to the other judges asked: "What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all answered, "He is worthy of death."

One most desirous of being absolutely fair to these Jews has to confess that they violated their own rules of procedure, at least as those rules were afterward reported in the Talmud. It was forbidden to put a prisoner to death, if the verdict was unanimous; the supposition being that in that case the court was prejudiced. This rule, if it was in existence so early, was, however, now ignored, and it was taken for granted that the first step in the legal condemnation of Jesus had been taken.

Jewish procedure, as formulated in the Talmud, likewise required that, when a man was condemned to death by the Sanhedrin, the sentence was not valid until it had been again voted by the judges at a meeting held a day later. These two meetings could not rightly be held on the same day. They observed this rule in part. They adjourned the case to a second meeting of the Sanhedrin

to be held after daylight, but, if they knew the rule, they violated its spirit in not deferring the second meeting till another day. Had they so deferred it, however, it would have fallen on the Sabbath, when a meeting could not be held, and, if they had this law, which is doubtful, they doubtless felt that the urgency of the case justified them in not following the exact wording of the law.

As some hours must elapse before the Sanhedrin could again assemble, they once more delivered Jesus to the Temple guards. The guards now regarded Jesus as a condemned prisoner and they amused themselves by abusing him. They spat upon him, blindfolded him, and then as one after another struck him, they said: "Prophecy unto us, thou Messiah, who is he who struck thee?" As Christ had been silent in the presence of those who accused him before the Jewish court, so he was silent now. We can all imagine what a sensitive, pure person would suffer under such circumstances, and Christ was the most sensitive and pure of all who have ever lived. He bore himself now with simple, silent dignity. As was said of him afterward, He, "when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."<sup>1</sup>

While these events, so freighted with tragic meaning, were being enacted in the upper room, Peter had been for a time warming himself by the fire below. Of course everybody in the palace that night knew what was going on, and why night was being turned into day. The arrest and trial of Jesus would naturally become a topic of conversation among both servants and Temple guards. The maid who kept the door drew near the fire at times and listened to the conversation. As these people were all in the service of the priests, we can easily imagine

<sup>1</sup> I Peter 2:23.

that the remarks made were of a nature hostile to Jesus and his friends. As the maid stood and listened she turned to Peter and said, "You were with the Nazarene, Jesus." It was a dangerous place for a friend of Jesus. Were he detected, Peter did not know what might happen to him. In Gethsemane his attack upon the Temple guard had been ignored in the confusion, but, if caught here, it might go hard with him. His first instinct was one of self-preservation, and he said: "I neither know nor understand what you mean." He then left the fire and went out into the porch and heard a cock crow. The maid was going in and out about her duties and saw Peter standing in the porch, and said to the bystanders: "This man is one of the Nazarenes." This time Peter flatly denied it. But even his denial revealed his identity, for his way of pronouncing words told from whence he came. Here in America we can tell by the way many people pronounce words which contain the letter "a" whether they come from New England or Philadelphia; by the way they pronounce words containing the combination "ou" whether they come from Philadelphia, Baltimore or Virginia; and by the way they pronounce certain other words, whether they come from New York. In Palestine the differences of pronunciation between different parts of the country, and even different villages, have always been much greater than here. One of the bystanders, therefore, said to Peter: "You are a Galilean, for your speech betrays you." Peter, having started on a cowardly course, felt compelled to persist in it. He was of volcanic temperament and was nervous and overwrought by the events of the night, so he began to curse and swear, to give emphasis to the statement: "I know not this man of whom you speak." He had hardly finished speaking when he heard a cock crow



again. This recalled to his mind the words of Jesus predicting his denial. He remembered his boast of readiness to die with Jesus, so confidently uttered only a few hours before, and contrasted it with his shameful denial of his matchless friend, and leaving the house of Caia-phas, he wept bitterly.

As soon as morning came, a second meeting of the Sanhedrin was held, in order to confirm, in accordance with their Oral Law, the sentence passed at their meeting held in the night. According to the later usage as recorded in the Talmud, this meeting seems to have been unlawful on still another ground. Such meetings were prohibited before the morning sacrifice had been completed, and that was not done before about nine o'clock, but in their desire to make haste before the friends of Jesus could rally, they apparently ignored this rule, if they had it. It is barely possible that on this morning, they had offered the sacrifice earlier than usual. This second meeting was probably brief. There was no hearing and, so far as we know, no debate. The sentence reached in the night was confirmed, and they led their prisoner away to the Prætorium, to make their accusation against him to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

Before this hour arrived, however, the priests had an unexpected visitor. It was Judas Iscariot. Poor fellow! The events of the night had turned out far otherwise than he expected. Instead of revealing himself as the Messiah, as Judas had thought Jesus would do, Jesus had submitted to his enemies, and had actually been condemned. Instead of trapping the priests, as Judas had intended, he had betrayed his best and most loved friend. His astute management, instead of hastening the kingdom of God, had wrecked everything that Jesus had through the past months built up. Now Judas saw in



its real ugliness the nature of his deed. He came back to the priests with the thirty shekels and said: "I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood." With a sneer the priests said, in effect, "That is nothing to us; that is your affair," and turned away from him.

Poor Judas threw down the money in the Temple; he hated it now. He went out a distracted and despairing man. He was blackened with infamy, he thought, that was unforgivable. The evil he had done was past repairing. He felt he could not endure life; he went and hanged himself.

## CHAPTER LX

### THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

(Mark 15: 1-20; Matt. 27: 11-31; Luke 23: 1-25; John 18: 28-19: 16a.)

**P**ONTIUS PILATE, the Roman governor, like other Roman governors of the province of Judæa, usually resided at Cæsarea, the seaport capital of the province. At the time of the Jewish Passover and other great feasts the governors used, however, to go to Jerusalem for a few days, so as to be on the spot, to quell any disturbance which might arise. The Jews were restive under Roman rule, and when congregated in large numbers and stirred by religious and patriotic feeling they frequently created disturbances. The Romans regarded them as turbulent and difficult to govern, so at these times the governor was accustomed to be on hand. This was doubtless one reason why the Sanhedrin was so glad to take advantage of the agency of Judas; it enabled them to accuse Jesus to the Roman governor without delay, and thus reduced the danger of popular interference on his behalf which delay might make possible.

Their fear of a popular uprising in the interest of Jesus was what urged them on now. They desired to secure his condemnation, if possible, before his friends could rally in his behalf. Perhaps, in view of the offer Judas had made them on the preceding day, they had then sent word to Pilate that they expected to bring

before him a dangerous prisoner the next morning, and had arranged for a hearing. In any case messengers must have conveyed to the governor as early as possible on Friday morning the fact that they wished to bring such a prisoner before him for trial.

At the northwest corner of the Temple area there had stood a fortress since the time of Nehemiah (444 B.C.). It had been rebuilt by Herod the Great and named Antonia for his friend Mark Antony. Adjoining this fortress on the north a Prætorium which served as a government building and barracks had been built; it was really an extension of the fortress. In the fortress and Prætorium a detachment of Roman soldiers was always kept, whose duty it was to maintain order, and in the Prætorium the governor resided when at Jerusalem. Hither, at the early hour at which Pilate had arranged to hear the case, the Jewish authorities went with their prisoner. According to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Pilate had set his judgment seat that morning in the open court and there he sat throughout the trial. This accords with Roman usage and is probably in accordance with the facts.

The trial began by the presentation of the charge against Jesus on the part of the members of the Jewish Sanhedrin. This accusation was, as reported by Luke, that he was perverting the Jewish nation (*i.e.*, undermining their allegiance to Rome), that he claimed to be the expected Jewish Messiah, or king, and that he endeavored to make their state independent so that tribute to Rome should cease. Some writers have regarded this as quite a different charge from that on which Jesus had been condemned by the Sanhedrin. They point out that that condemnation was for blasphemy, while here the charge is political. Such writers overlook the fact that

the claim of Jesus to Messiahship, which Judas had betrayed and which the Sanhedrin believed they had established on Jesus' own confession, appeared in very different aspects when viewed respectively from the point of view of Jewish law and from that of Roman political government. From the point of view of the Jewish leaders it was their duty to consider it in its former aspect, when acting within the sphere of their own ecclesiastical law, and in the latter aspect, when acting as subjects of the Roman empire. The charge presented before both bodies was the same charge, only in the one case it was considered from the point of view of the Jewish religion, and in the other case, of Roman politics. After the charge had been presented, Pilate turned to Jesus and asked: "Art thou the king of the Jews?" This was equivalent to asking him to plead guilty or not guilty to the charge brought against him. Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us that Jesus gave the non-committal answer, "Thou sayest." This was not a denial, but it was not an admission; it left the charge to be proved by the evidence.

According to the Gospel of John, which perhaps in this case recalls more of the details, Jesus answered Pilate's first question by asking in substance: "Do you use the word 'king' in the Roman sense, or have the Jews been talking to you, and do you mean by it the Jewish Messiah?" The conversation that followed may be thus translated: Pilate answered "Am I a Jew? Your own nation has delivered you to me; what have you done?" Then Jesus replied: "My kingdom is not of this world; if it were, my servants would fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but my kingdom is not from hence." Pilate then asked, "Art thou a king, then?" Jesus replied: "Thou sayest that I am a king. I was



born and came into the world to bear witness to the truth." It is noteworthy that Jesus did not deny the charge that he was a king, but claimed kingship in such a peculiar way that Pilate was convinced that there was no political danger in it. According to Luke and John, the governor then turned to the Jewish accusers and said in substance: "There is nothing in this man with which I can find fault. He may claim to be a king, but it is not in a sense which makes it necessary to punish him." The Jews replied, "He stirs up the people, beginning from Galilee even unto this place."

The account of the trial is very brief in the Gospels. They clearly do not tell us all that was said. Perhaps we may give some credence to the apochryphal "Acts of Pilate," which state that the Jews gave evidence in different ways against Jesus, and others gave evidence in his favor. Some, testifying for him, showed that he had done much good without breaking the Law; others showed that, though he broke the Law, as when he healed on the Sabbath day, the blessings of his work more than made up for the transgression. Testimony such as this, if really given, tended to strengthen Pilate's conviction that Jesus intended no political offense.

At the mention of Galilee, so St. Luke tells us, Pilate thought of another expedient. Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, was at that moment in Jerusalem. He, too, had come up to the Passover; he was staying in the old palace of his father, Herod the Great, on the west side of the city, parts of which may still be seen in the modern fortress by the "Jaffa Gate." Pilate had complete jurisdiction over the case, for, if Jesus were a dangerous political agitator he had been arrested within the bounds of Pilate's province; but Pilate did not believe Jesus to be a dangerous character, and so, with the hope

of getting Herod to employ his influence with the Jews to persuade them to drop their charge, he directed that Jesus should be taken across the city to Herod's palace. He accordingly adjourned his court for a time and sent Jesus to Herod, doubtless with a message which secured the desired examination of the prisoner by the tetrarch.

This was the Herod who had been disturbed by the reputation of Jesus as a prophet, who had thought, on account of his uneasy conscience, that Jesus might be John the Baptist come to life again, and who had sought to arrest Jesus. He was naturally glad, therefore, when Jesus appeared before him. Herod had long been on unfriendly terms with Pilate, but the compliment Pilate paid him in sending Jesus for him to examine disarmed his enmity, and made him Pilate's friend. Herod Antipas was the man whom Jesus had called "that fox"—the only man of whom Jesus had ever thus spoken—and now at last the two stood face to face. Herod asked Jesus many questions, but Jesus stood in quiet dignity and refused to answer them. Herod had not jurisdiction over him now. Herod took his revenge by dressing Jesus up in gorgeous apparel as though he were a mock king, making sport of him and permitting his guards to do the same, and, thus dressed, he sent Jesus back to Pilate. The time had been when Herod would have put Jesus to death could he have got him in his power, but, now that he had been arrested in Pilate's province, it was impolitic to do so. Had he yielded to his desires he might have offended the Government at Rome.

When Jesus returned to the Prætorium Pilate resumed the judgment seat and made another effort not to have the Sanhedrin press its charges. He pointed out that Herod had found nothing worthy of death in Jesus; his claim to Messiahship was rather to be made sport of.

He said to them in substance: "I am accustomed to release to you at Passover time a Jewish prisoner; let me release Jesus as this year's prisoner. I will scourge him (that will be a sufficient punishment) and release him.

There happened at that very time to be lying in prison at Jerusalem a Jew named Barabbas, who had done the very things which the Jews were trying to persuade Pilate that Jesus was likely to do. He had engaged in armed rebellion and in the struggle that followed had committed murder. When Pilate proposed to release Jesus as the political act of grace for that year, the Jewish leaders cried, "No! no! not him, but Barabbas." "What, then, shall I do with him whom you call king of the Jews?" said Pilate. They and all their followers who had crowded into the court to witness the trial cried, "Crucify him!" Pilate said, "Why? what crime has he actually committed?" They cried more vehemently, "Crucify him! Let him be crucified." Pilate had become convinced early in the examination that, although the charge brought against Jesus by the Jews was technically correct, so far as the safety of the State was concerned, Jesus was harmless; hence his efforts to persuade the Jews to withdraw their charge, or accept the release of Jesus. A late tradition embodied in the Gospel of Matthew says that Pilate's opinion of Jesus was strengthened by a message from his wife who sent to say, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."

The tumultuous cries of the Jews rendered, however, further argument with them useless. They would not withdraw the accusation against Jesus, but were bound to press it. The Gospel of John tells us that they said: "If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend:



for whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." That was the crux of the case. Jesus had admitted that he was, in a sense, a king. Technically the Jews were right. If they pressed the case, Pilate was bound to condemn Jesus, or run the risk of having to explain at Rome why he had not rid the province of one who was planning rebellion. He, therefore, yielded, passed sentence upon Jesus, and delivered him to the Roman soldiery that the sentence might be carried out.

Numerous writers have claimed that the trial of Christ before Pilate was illegal, because Pilate did not conduct the case in accordance with the legal procedure followed in the city of Rome. Much evidence has been collected of late, however, especially from papyri found in Egypt, to prove that in the provinces of the Roman empire capital cases were not conducted at any time in the leisurely and formal manner in which they were carried on at Rome. A governor visited a part of his province for a few days at a time, and heard and rapidly disposed of numerous cases. Many of the governors were military men, and reached their decisions often in accord with canons of their own making rather than those of the Roman courts. At no time did residents of the provinces enjoy the legal protection granted to the Romans unless they had in some way, like St. Paul, become Roman citizens. So far as we can now judge, the trial of Jesus before Pilate was quite in accord with legal procedure in the Roman provinces.

After Jesus had been condemned to crucifixion, the soldiery scourged him. It was a terrible ordeal, but apparently inflicted in mercy on those who were condemned to be crucified, that their physical strength might be in part exhausted, so that they would not have to endure so long the more awful tortures of the cross.



The Gospels pass rapidly over these scenes of horror. In order to be scourged Jesus was stripped, his hands tied behind him, his back bent, and he was bound to a column. He was then whipped with lashes of leather loaded with lead, or spikes, or bones, which lacerated the back and chest and face. The scourging was sometimes continued until the victim fell down a bleeding mass of torn flesh. This terrible punishment the sensitive Jesus now suffered.

When it was finished, he could still stand, and while preparations for his crucifixion were being completed, he underwent another mocking from the Roman soldiery more cruel than that which he had suffered from the Temple guards. Again they threw the purple robe of Antipas over his bleeding shoulders, they improvised a crown of cruel thorns and pressed it upon his head, and cried "Hail, king of the Jews!" Then, sometimes smiting him and sometimes bowing their knees to him in mock humility, these men whose trade was war, whose natures like their occupation were unrefined, whose sport was coarse, and who supposed Jesus to be an unsuccessful rebel, amused themselves by insulting him. Thus crafty ecclesiastics, the Roman politician, the corrupt tetrarch, and the hardened soldiery all had their part in this supreme tragedy.

## CHAPTER LXI

### THE CRUCIFIXION

(Mark 15:21-47; Matt. 27:32-66; Luke 23:26-56;  
John 19:16b-42.)

**C**RUCIFIXION as a punishment is a survival of primitive savagery. Probably the Assyrians are responsible for the use of it in the eastern Mediterranean world. They were the most brutal and savage of all the nations which built up empires in the East. Their kings boast of impaling men on stakes and of skinning them alive. In Phœnicia crucifixion seems to have survived as a form of barbarity inherited from the Assyrians. A Jewish king, Alexander Jannæus, had once employed it, but the Romans did not adopt it until after the time of Julius Cæsar. By 30 A.D. it seems to have been frequently used as a punishment in Judæa.

Crosses were of three kinds: what we call the St. Andrew's cross (X), the cross in the form of a T, and the so-called Latin cross (†). Christ's cross was probably of the last mentioned kind. The upright beam was long enough to permit the infixing of an inscription above his head, and his feet seem not to have been lifted far from the ground. Even in his weakened condition he could speak to those about him and be heard by them. While the beams of the cross were being prepared, the soldiers, as already observed, mocked and tortured Jesus.

When the cross was ready the soldiers placed the beams on Jesus' shoulders (it was customary to make

those convicted to crucifixion carry their own crosses) and started for the place of execution. This was a spot called Golgotha, or "Place of a Skull"<sup>1</sup> (probably because it was shaped like a skull), somewhere outside the walls of Jerusalem. Much as we should like to know, we cannot be certain just where this spot was. There has been a tradition since about 325 A.D. that it was on or near the spot where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre now stands. On the other hand, in modern times a theory has grown up and become traditional that Golgotha was the hill over the so-called Jeremiah's Grotto, just north of the modern Damascus Gate. There is much more reason to believe that it was on the former site than on the latter. If only we knew just where the north wall of Jerusalem ran at that time, we should feel more certain about it. Toward Golgotha, wherever it may have been situated, Jesus, escorted by soldiers, now took his way. As always in such cases, a throng followed. Some of these were priests who went from hatred; others went from idle curiosity; they wanted to enjoy the horror of seeing the torture.

By the time they reached the gate of the city through which they had to pass, Jesus, weakened by the terrible ordeal of scourging, sank under his cross, no longer able to carry it. There happened to be coming into the city at that moment through that gate a Jew from distant Cyrene in North Africa, named Simon. Perhaps he had come to Jerusalem to attend the Passover. Cyrene was a long way off; perhaps this was the only time in Simon's life that he had ever been able to attend it. Possibly he had come to Jerusalem to live, for he is said to have been coming from the field. So far as we know he knew nothing of Jesus, but as he chanced just at that

<sup>1</sup> "Calvary" is derived from the Latin translation of it.

time to meet this sacredly solemn procession, the soldiers seized him, laid the cross upon him, and compelled him to turn around and carry it to Golgotha. It was a strange experience for Simon thus against his will to be brought into such close association with the most tragic experience of the Christ, but, apparently, he became a Christian, for his two sons were well known as Christians when the Gospel of Mark was written.

During the morning it had been noised through the city that Jesus was to be crucified; both friends and foes knew it. Outside the city the way was lined with people, among whom were many friends of Jesus. These, especially the women, wept aloud at his impending fate. Some of these were from Jerusalem and its suburbs; others from Galilee. Turning to these Jesus said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." He foretold that days were coming, when they would bless the women who had no children, when they would cry to the mountains: "Fall on us"; and to the hills, "Cover us." Even at that hour he had sympathy for his wayward kinsmen, and, seeing clearly the awful woe which their course must bring on them (a fate which actually came forty years later) he had leisure from himself, even in his exhaustion and suffering, thus to address them.

When they reached Golgotha, they crucified Jesus. As nearly as we can find out, the process was as follows: First the upright wood was firmly planted in the ground. Next the cross-beam was placed on the ground, the victim laid upon it, his arms extended and bound to it. Then a strong sharp nail was driven first through his right hand into the beam, and next through his left. Then, by means of ropes or by the use of ladders, the sufferer was raised and the cross-beam bound or nailed



to the upright. A rest or support for the body was also fastened to it. Lastly, the feet were extended and either a nail hammered into each, or a large spike driven through them both. One who was crucified might hang for hours, and even days in unutterable anguish, until at last the unconsciousness of death put an end to the torture. It was a form of punishment too cruel to be inflicted on any being that can feel, either animal or human; and yet it was visited on the most heavenly of all the world's inhabitants!

To complete the Crucifixion there was placed by order of Pilate a placard at the top of the cross, which read "The King of the Jews." This placard indicated the reason for the crucifixion of the victim. To this title the Jewish authorities, so St. John tells us, objected; they thought it identified them with Jesus. They tried to get Pilate to change it to "He said, I am the king of the Jews," but Pilate refused, and the placard remained unchanged. It was the real charge on which the execution of Jesus had been secured.

The Gospel of John tells us that, when Jesus was crucified, the soldiers divided his clothing among them, but that, since his outer garment was without seam and so rare and costly, they cast lots for it. This was apparently the purple robe that Herod Antipas had mockingly put upon Christ, and in which he had again been clad while the Roman soldiers mocked him in the Prætorium.

The Jewish authorities, priests, Pharisees, scribes, whom Jesus had denounced in such vigorous language in the Temple only two days before, now had their revenge. They could not forbear taunting Jesus in his suffering. Even the false witnesses, walking up and down in front of the cross wagged their hands and said: "Ha! thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in

three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross." The priests said: "He saved others, himself he cannot save! Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross that we may see and believe."

At the time Jesus was crucified two robbers had suffered a like punishment. One of these joined with the multitude in reproaching Christ. He sarcastically asked: "Art not thou the Messiah? Save thyself and us." The other one, however, reproved him. "We," he said, "receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss." Perhaps he had heard Christ speak at some time during his ministry, and had known something of his work. At any rate, in spite of his crimes, he now had a sort of blind faith, not only in the goodness of Jesus, but in the ultimate triumph of good over evil, for turning to Jesus he said, "Remember me, when thou comest in thy kingdom." He was a Jew and expected a supernatural kingdom to be established in which he could share, although he must now die. Jesus responded to his faith and comforted him with the words: "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

While Jesus was hanging on his cross his mother (who had apparently eaten the Passover somewhere with her other sons), with Mary Magdalene, Salome, and other women from Galilee who were followers of Jesus, stood at a distance and kept with aching hearts such watch as only patient, loving women know how to keep.

The Gospel of John relates a touching incident. As Jesus hung on the cross Mary and the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (Lazarus?) were standing near enough to hear his voice, weak though it was, when Jesus said, first looking at his mother and then turning his eyes to the disciple as he spoke: "Woman, behold thy son." Then in the same manner he said to the disciple: "Be-

hold thy mother." The gospel adds that from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. Apparently this was only for temporary shelter while Mary remained in Jerusalem. At least one of her sons, James, afterward became a Christian, and was the first great leader or, as later called, bishop of the Church at Jerusalem. She can hardly have lived permanently afterward with one not her kinsman. The incident gives us evidence of what we should naturally expect, that even in his agony on the cross Jesus was filled with love for his mother and showed it in tender care for her.

Jesus had been crucified before twelve o'clock, and, although the weather had been fine all night and up till that hour, unusually heavy clouds now covered the sky and cast a gloom over the surrounding country. The darkness was such that it seemed as though nature sympathized with the Holy Victim and veiled her face at his suffering. The effect was so impressive that all the Gospels record the fact. For three hours the pall hung over the land until Jesus expired, but through its gloom the soldiers and the faithful women watched.

In spite of his pain and exhaustion, Jesus had borne himself with cheerful power. The taunts of those who mocked him had been unable to move him, and he had had leisure from himself to comfort the penitent robber and to take loving thought for his mother. So real was his humanity, however, that during these hours of gloom his feelings ebbed again as they had in Gethsemane, only now in a more terrible way. It seemed to him as though God had forsaken him—as though all his ideals were to end in disaster. His blank despair was such that he cried out in the words with which the twenty-second Psalm begins: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The cry was so piercing—so despairing—



that the very Aramaic words in which it was uttered were burned into the memory of those who heard it and have been passed on to us. They were "*Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?*" The cry denoted such suffering that even one of the soldiers was touched by it and offered Jesus a stupefying drink, such as was sometimes given to render sufferers somewhat insensible to the agony of their tortures, but, after tasting it, Jesus declined to drink it. He would bear to the end what he had to bear in full possession of all his powers. Some of the Jews who were standing near either misunderstood his cry or pretended to misunderstand it. They said in substance: "He calls for Elijah. Let him alone; let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Many at this time believed Elijah to be a sort of guardian spirit of all good Israelites, and this sarcastic speech was an allusion to that.

The slow hours dragged on. The despairing cry of Jesus was not in vain. God sent him a comforting consciousness of a Father's presence, and sympathy, and love. About three o'clock in the afternoon Jesus, using as the expression of his deepest feelings words of another Psalm, said: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,"<sup>1</sup> and bowing his head, died.

The commander of the Roman soldiers, an experienced Roman centurion, who had doubtless witnessed many such scenes, and who had observed Jesus' bearing through all his suffering, is said to have exclaimed, when all was over, "Truly this man was a son of God!"

We are told by the Gospel of John that as the short spring day drew to its close, the Jews went to Pilate and asked that the legs of the crucified men should be broken, that they might be taken down from the cross. The

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 31:5.



sufferings of such victims were sometimes cut short by striking them in a vital part with a spear, but, in order to compensate for the shortening of the tortures of crucifixion, it was customary in such cases, before putting the victims out of their misery, to break their legs with clubs. The request of the Jews was really a request that the crucified men should be despatched and taken down. The book of Deuteronomy forbids that the body of a man hanged on a tree (*i.e.*, on wood) should be left hanging all night.<sup>1</sup> Pilate accordingly gave the order to have the sufferers' lives ended. When the soldiers, who were assigned to this service, came to Jesus they were surprised to find him already dead, so they did not break his legs, but contented themselves with piercing his heart with a spear. Then the bodies were taken down.

Although Jesus had been hurried to his Crucifixion by the Sanhedrin, there were at least two members of it who had taken no part in the proceedings. They were friends of Jesus. They were Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa (Arimathæa was, perhaps, Ramah, five miles north of Jerusalem). Joseph was rich and had recently been having a tomb for himself and family cut out of the rock near the place where the Crucifixion took place. Such rock-cut tombs (the entrances to some of which were closed with great wheel-like stones) were very common in ancient Palestine. Although Joseph had been unable to save Jesus (the priests had been careful not to make him a member of the court that tried Christ) he now went to Pilate and begged the body of the Nazarene. Pilate readily granted it to him, and, wrapping it in linen (there was no time before the Sabbath, which began at sundown, for proper burial), he laid it in his new tomb

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 21:23.

and rolled the stone across its door. It was not meant for a permanent burial, but to give the body temporary shelter over the Sabbath. A late tradition, recorded in Matthew only, says that the Jews asked Pilate that the tomb might be guarded, and that Pilate told them that they might set their Temple guards to watch it, which they did.

On the previous evening, when eating his last supper, Jesus had taught his Disciples that his death was in some way caused by the sins of men and was an expiation for sin. To keep that great fact in men's minds, he had called into existence the Eucharist, to be throughout the ages a symbol of his love and of God's love—a love that revealed itself through a sacrifice supremely great. By the agonizing death upon the Cross what he had foreseen was accomplished, and God's supreme message was spoken to the world.

## CHAPTER LXII

### THE RESURRECTION

(Mark 16: 1-8; I Cor. 15: 3-8; Matt. 28: 1-20; Luke 24: 1-52; Mark 16: 9-20; John 20: 1-31.)

**M**OST biographies end with the death of their hero, but a life of Jesus Christ which stopped there would be incomplete, for he rose again. No other fact in history is so well attested as his resurrection. On Friday night his Disciples were scattered, despondent, hopeless. Through Saturday they avoided the authorities. On Sunday, because of Jesus' appearance to some of them, their hope revived. For some days he continued to appear to different disciples. Their faith in him was renewed. Their courage to live in accordance with his teaching had a new birth. Association with him again filled them with fearlessness, and these slightly educated fishermen, in the face of persecution from their Jewish brethren, founded the Christian Church, which exists to the present hour. Not ancient documents only, but the Christian Church bridges the chasm from the first Easter morning to the present time. No fact in history is more certain than these appearances of Jesus to his disciples after his death and burial.

While this is so, the nature of his resurrection is not so certain. Many doubtless think that they understand it until they begin to study the subject. Was his body which was buried in the tomb actually reanimated? Were those chemical processes which begin in the tissues

after the spirit has left the body actually reversed in his case? Or was it simply the spirit of Jesus which made itself manifest to the spirits of his disciples? These are questions which we wish that we might answer, but in the present state of our knowledge no convincing answer is possible.

As we study the accounts of the Resurrection in the different Gospels and in St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, three facts become clear. The first is that in the earliest accounts the appearances of Jesus after the Resurrection were spiritual or psychical. The second is that the accounts which were written later endeavor to show that his material body arose. The third is that, according to a tradition represented in three of our sources, he appeared to his Disciples in Galilee (two of them represent him as appearing only in Galilee), while three of the sources omit all reference to appearances in Galilee and imply that his Disciples were in Jerusalem when all such appearances occurred. In this case also, it is the earliest tradition that tells of the appearances in Galilee.

Such are some of the puzzling facts which face one as he seeks to understand these narratives fully. We should remember that these first disciples of Jesus were not modern scientific students; they were simple peasants—honest, devoted men—men who loved Jesus with all their hearts, but who lived in a very different intellectual world from that in which modern scientific inquiry is carried on. In some way they had experiences which convinced them that Jesus was not lying dead in the Underworld, where, according to the belief of that time, all the departed were supposed to await the general resurrection, but that God had raised him up, and that he still lived. The certainty of this gave them new hope



and courage. They acted upon it and became changed men. In order to convey to others the ground of their belief, they told of the experiences on which it rested as well as they could, and in time these reports took the form of the narratives which we now find in the Gospels. We cannot wonder that, under the circumstances, it is impossible to answer all the questions about the Resurrection that a modern student asks. It is not strange that some insist that the Resurrection was a spiritual or psychical event, while others are equally certain that Christ's physical body was revived.

In some way, however, even if we do not understand how, Jesus convinced the Disciples that he was alive, and that he was still a power in their lives and in the world. In the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles we find the same men who walked with him in Galilee, and yet they are not the same. Association with the risen Christ has given them a new poise, a more stable character, a more courageous will, a loftier purpose. Many since, even to the present hour, have had similar experiences. Notwithstanding our present inability to understand all the material or psychical aspects of the Resurrection, we cannot doubt the great fact.

## CHAPTER LXIII

### THE PLACE OF JESUS CHRIST IN HISTORY

**J**ESUS CHRIST, although he lived the life of a simple peasant in an obscure province of the Roman empire, is the central figure of the world's history. Although his public ministry extended over less than a year and a half, he is to-day the most widely and helpfully influential of all the persons who have ever lived in the world. In concluding this story of his life, it seems fitting to think for a moment of causes that have made this so.

Jesus taught his Disciples to look upon him as the Jewish Messiah. True, he tried hard to impress upon them that the ordinary ideas of the Messiah's work were wrong; nevertheless, he used the term Messiah to describe himself. When, after his death, his appearances to his disciples convinced them that God had raised him from the dead, they believed him to be indeed the heavenly Messiah, who had been described in one of their religious books<sup>1</sup> as having existed with God in heaven from before the foundation of the world. They naturally associated him, therefore, with God. His wonderful life, his matchless teaching, and his holy character all seemed to them to harmonize with that. They soon came to think of him as an incarnation of God. "God was in Christ," St. Paul says. The experience of millions of Christians through the centuries has confirmed

<sup>1</sup> The Book of Enoch, chapters 46 and 48.

this belief : hence the place of Jesus Christ in the history of the world.

In consequence of the conditions which prevailed in the world until about a hundred years ago, travel was slow and difficult, and peoples of different races and religions knew little of one another. Almost no one approached the study of any subject with a desire first to see the facts and then to look for their real causes. Every one came with his traditional prejudices and explanations. It must be confessed that Christians, like the devotees of other religions, were provincial. They did not look at the world broadly. Instead of seeing in such great religious teachers as the Buddha and Confucius real prophets of God, they regarded them as deceivers under the influence of the Devil.

Now that steam and electricity have made the world one neighborhood, and the scientific and sympathetic study of religions has made us acquainted with the great non-Christian religious leaders, there are those, even in Christian countries, who have in their thought, rushed to the other extreme. Jesus was, they say, a great religious leader. He is worthy of being classed with Confucius, the Buddha, Zoroaster, and Mohammed, but is no greater than they. Not the incarnation of God, but one among the human prophets—such is their estimate of Jesus. Many readers of this book will probably hear, if they have not already heard, such sentiments expressed.

The writer has studied with sympathy, pleasure, and profit the works of the four religious leaders just mentioned and of many others, but he cannot be blind to the fact that there was a power in Jesus Christ which was not in them. But two or three evidences of this power can be mentioned here.

(1) There is a striking difference between Jesus

and the founders of other religions in the length of time employed in impressing their teachings upon their disciples. Zoroaster taught for forty-seven years. He had small success until a king named Vishtaspa became his patron. This king helped him during the last thirty-five years of his ministry. Buddha taught for more than thirty years and had a king for his patron. Confucius spent about fifty years as a teacher and had a number of princes as pupils and patrons. Mohammed's ministry lasted for twenty years and he met with small success until he became a leader of armies and offered those whom he approached the choice of conversion or death. In contrast with these, think of Jesus, who preached for less than eighteen months, had no royal patron, and died with criminals on a Roman cross! Great as the others were, there must have been a power in him that was not in them.

(2) Jesus possessed a power of ethical and religious insight that these others did not possess. Buddha and Confucius saw ethical reality with remarkable clearness. They are among the greatest ethical geniuses of the world. In some points their teachings are like those of Jesus. But one has only to pass from their teaching to his to see how wonderfully he surpassed them. In religious insight they fall far below him. He speaks of God and duty as no other has ever spoken. Men, as they listen, discover that he touches chords which vibrate to no other touch. Just as an accomplished scientist knows unerringly who is the greatest master of his science, so the truly religious man, who tests religious theories in the laboratory of life, unerringly pronounces Jesus Christ the supreme authority in this sphere. He had an insight, a power, a genius, a nature—call it what you will—that distinguishes him from all others.



Jesus was well acquainted with the expectation of a supernatural Messiah held by his fellow countrymen, and he knew himself to be that Messiah. He found his own nature to be such that it in some true sense corresponded with that expectation, although far more spiritual and sublime. He who knew God and man and truth so much more clearly than others, could not be mistaken with reference to himself. The perfection of his life and his holy, healing influence on the world, prove that he was not mistaken. As St. Paul said, in him "we all with unveiled face behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord."

Sometimes in the summer we go to the seashore and sit by some bay to admire its beauty. We do not look at the whole ocean, but in the bay we get an idea of what the ocean is. Far, far beyond the range of our vision the ocean rolls. We cannot sound its depths, but we know that wherever its waters are they have the same quality of saltness which we find in the bay, that however much the waves outside may be greater, they are of the same general shape as those of the bay, that the ocean, like the bay, reflects the gray and blue of cloud or sky, and that its waves glint in the sun like those upon which we have looked in the bay. Something like this is the relation of Jesus to God. In him the nature of God has come into our human life that we may understand a little what that nature is like. We do not see all of God, but we see enough to convince us that God is like that, and we bow our heads and worship.

He surpasses all our attempted definitions of him, but all who see him as he was can say with the author of the Gospel of John that the "Word," or self-revealing power of God, in him "became flesh and tabernacled among us."









# 14 DAY USE

## RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

### LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or  
on the date to which renewed.

Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

15 Nov '58 A H	
15 Dec	
15 Jan	
15 Feb	
REC'D LD	
FEB 25 1959	
3 Feb '61 EM	
REC'D LD	
MAR 29 1961	
18 May '61 EM	
REC'D LD	
JUL 18 1961	
10 Jun '64 SB	
REC'D LD	
MAY 27 '64 -12 M	

LD 21A-50m-9, '58  
(6889s10)476B

General Library  
University of California  
Berkeley

544523

BT 301

33

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

